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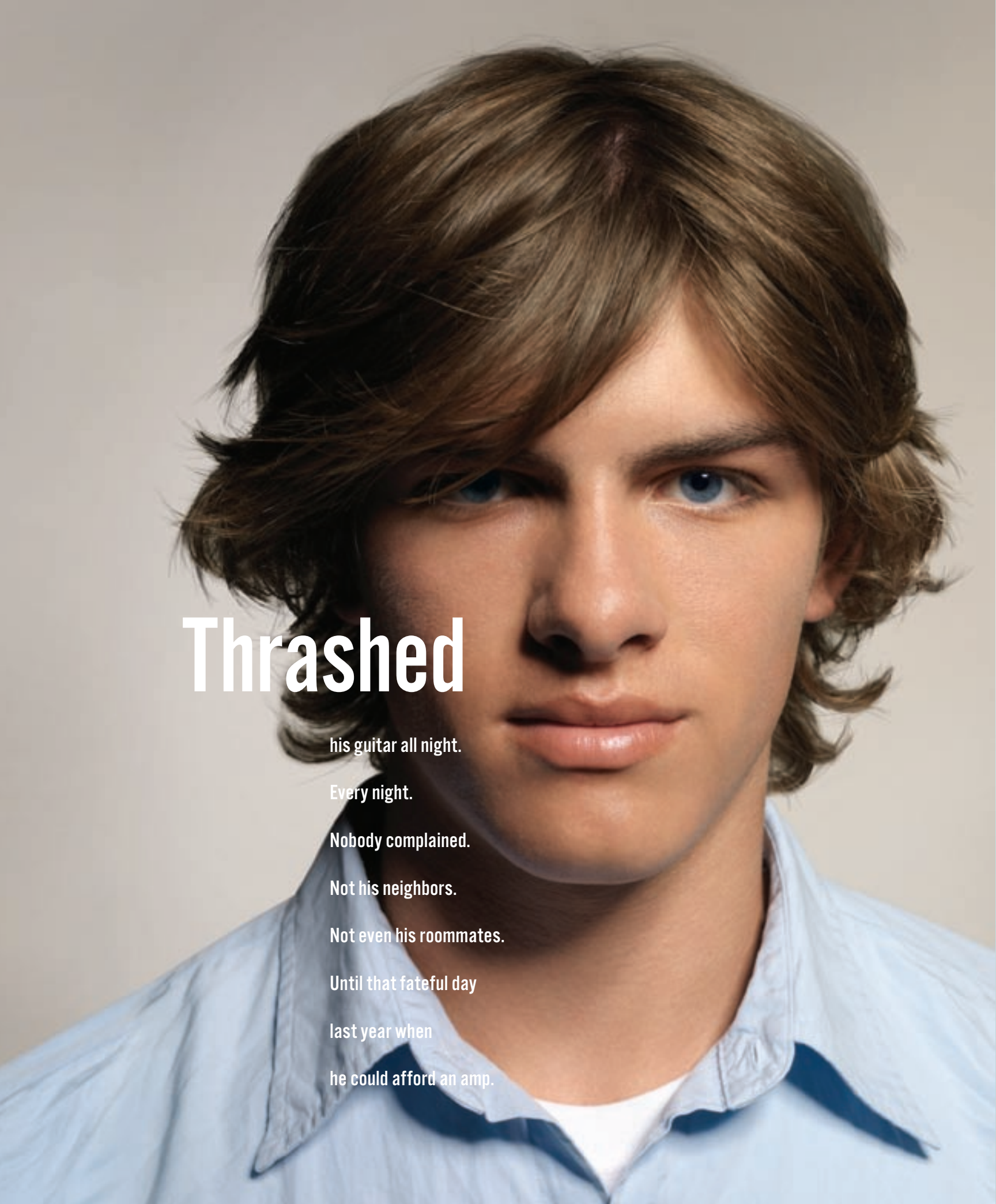
BLACK MAGIC

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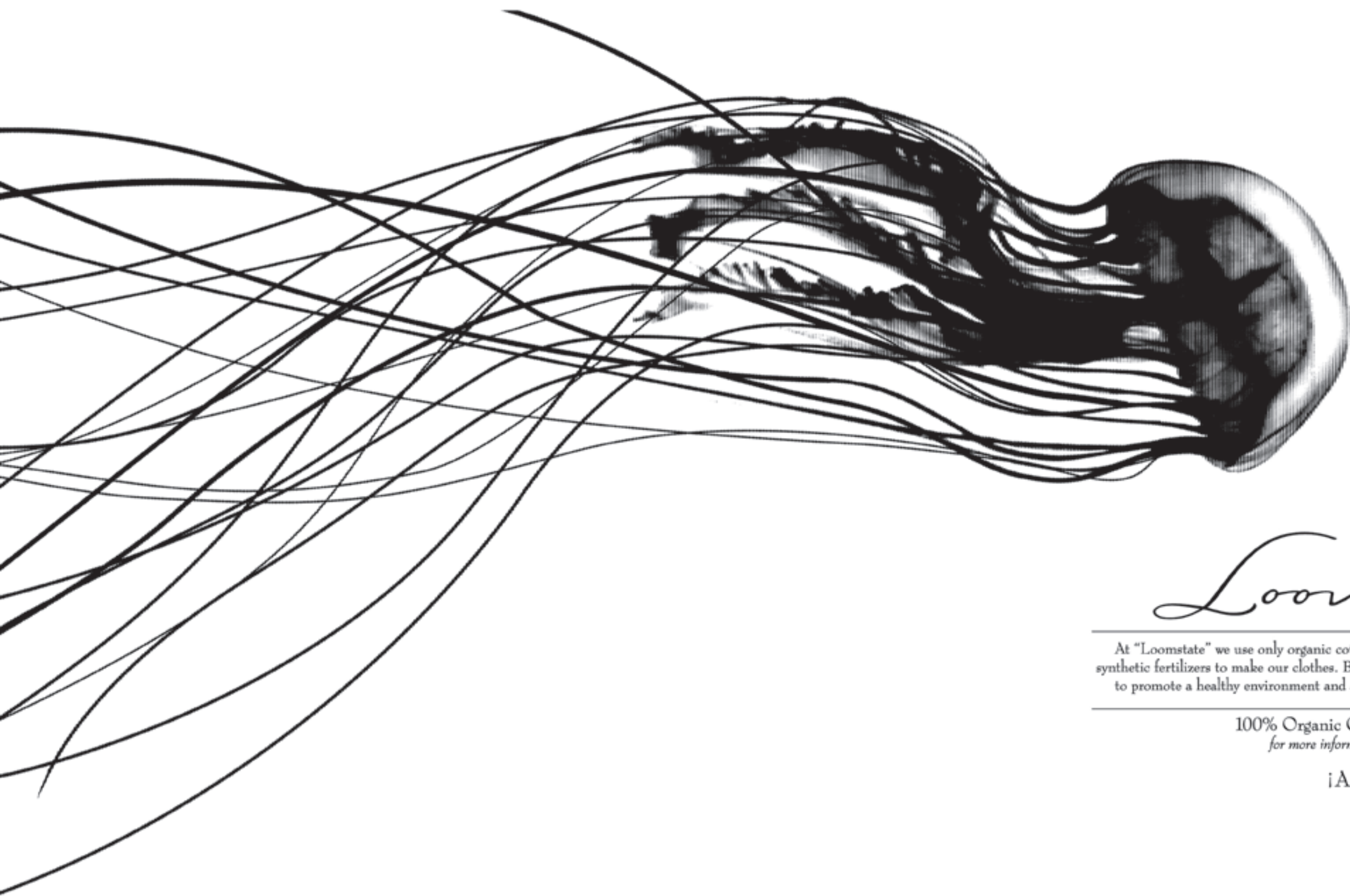
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Typography (pencil and acrylic) by Darren Booth (www.darrenbooth.com)

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CHAPTER TWO COMING SOON



ED'S RANT I HEART MUSIC



The Knife's "Heartbeats" is, perhaps, my perfect pop moment. It starts with a metronomic and demanding, yet sweet, march; where the snare would come in—if this were a proper techno track—dances a curious rhythm that sounds like it was played by a Trinidadian ghost using a hollow bone as a drumstick. After more than 40 seconds of intro tease enters Karin Dreier's alien trill, her soft consonants framed by baroque vines of synthetic melody—part Nina Hagen, part Nena, as re-imagined in the futuristic setting of *The Fifth Element*. The song doesn't wear out its welcome; it fades out at 3:51 in a glorious rainbow of multi-layered yelps (Flanged Alpine yodels? A children's chorus singing Haitian voodoo chants?), and it totally leaves you wanting more.

Rarely since The Smiths and Suede have I fallen in love with lyrics, but words are The Knife's final blade-twist through my heart. The lines in "Heartbeats" are open to interpretation—Karin boasts the most cryptic couplets in electro-pop—but I swear this song is about 4,000 weekends lost to partying. "One night to push and scream/And then relief/Ten days of perfect tunes/The colors red and blue" sounds like a post-WMC or Sonar diary entry while "Both under influence/We had divine sense/To know what to say/Mind is a razor blade" suggests drug-fueled bonding on the dancefloor. The combination of these stanzas with minor-key melodies and carnival-like touches summons up nostalgia for thumping speakers, furious crushes, flashing strobes, racing thoughts, and staying up until the sun rises on Sunday morning. And neither Rex the Dog's pumping techno remix nor José Gonzales' heart-wrenching acoustic cover seems to dilute the track's essence.

As you can tell, I'm psyched to have The Knife on the cover, and proud of techno bandit Philip Sherburne for wrangling answers out of this notoriously tight-lipped brother-sister pair. But the love flows freely throughout this issue—just check our Labels We Love feature for evidence. This is the fifth year in a row that we've picked our favorite independent imprints and even though it's a bitch tracking some people down to give them props, it's always fun to read the final product. I love imagining the staff of Seattle's Sub Pop all crazed off of Sparks Black and playing air hockey, or Sublight owner Aaron Rintoul designing Enduser's CD cover in his living room in the middle of a harsh Winnipeg winter—and it's doubly fun seeing the label owners' photos.

Elsewhere, Brooklyn hip-hop head Jesse Serwer had a rad time talking to Detroit's Karriem Riggins, who was tracked down in Los Angeles while putting the finishing touches on Dilla's posthumous album, *The Shining*. (Look out for a limited-edition t-shirt and New Era hat, designed by the Leroy Jenkins team, to accompany the record this fall.) And writer Stacey Dugan got an unexpected earful from Kool Keith when he ranted to her for 45 minutes non-stop about aliens and conspiracy theories.

You see, making an issue of *XLR8R* isn't just about words and phone calls and worrying. It's also about love.

- Vivian Host, Editor

GRIFFIN

Accessorize



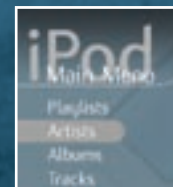
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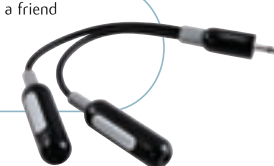
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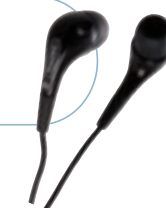
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ON THE COVER: The Knife photographed by Elin Berge and illustrated by Darren Booth

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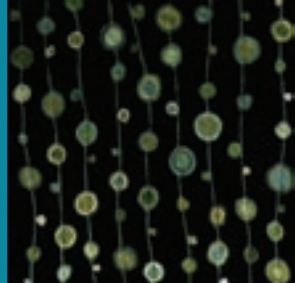
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 Darren Booth, 27, is a Canada-based freelance illustrator and typographer. He's done work for a diverse roster of clients including Penguin Books, ESPN, Canada Post, Herman Miller, and Continental Airlines. Darren's work has also appeared in art exhibitions in San Diego, Philadelphia, New York, and Toronto and he's also lectured at the School of Visual Arts in New York and Sheridan College in Oakville, Ontario. He currently resides in Hamilton, Ontario with his wife Rebecca.
www.darrenbooth.com



BRANDON IVERS
 Brandon Ivers loves to write about synthesizers, but that doesn't mean he's one of those guys that would corner you at a party and yammer on about Rick Wakeman and the "warmness" of tubes. Besides, he's more of a Roxy Music/Brian Eno guy, anyway. Currently residing in Seattle, Brandon's free time is usually spent running and writing, the latter of which frequently appears in evil, *XLR8R*-competing magazines and controversially named blogs.



LUCIANA LOPEZ
 Luciana Lopez lived in Brazil, the U.K., and Japan before finding herself in Portland as a reporter for the *Oregonian* newspaper. By day she's part of the mainstream media; by night she plots her escape to another corner of the globe. She hates sea urchin, kimchi, and hard-boiled eggs, but will otherwise eat just about anything. She went through a trance phase years ago, but she's recovered now, thanks. Like every third newspaper reporter in the country, she's at work on a novel. Someday she might finish it. Maybe.



URBAN YETTI
 Between creating silkscreened installations, DJing in San Francisco's Mission district, and fashioning nightmares for young children, the Urban Yetti (a.k.a. Aaron Terry) does a good job of forgetting the peaks of his native Himalayas. City life is good these days, which keeps the artwork fresh and provides ample opportunity for tanning pelts on rooftops and straight flossing in sewers and junkyards. The Urban Yetti's photography has been featured in *Ego Trip*, *Vibe*, *Spin*, and *Dwell* magazines, but *XLR8R* has much higher standards than those rags.
www.urbanyetti.com




MISTAKE MISTAKE MISTAKE MISTAKE

James Figurine is the latest project from Jimmy Tamborello (The Postal Service, Dntel, Figurine), with additional help from John Tejada, Jenny Lewis, Geoff McFetridge, Morgan Nagler, Erlend Oye, and Sonya Westcott.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Like us? Hate us? Write us! Email letters to letters@xlr8r.com or send mail to XLR8R Magazine 1388 Haight Street #105 San Francisco, CA 94117.



Dublin Calling

I have been meaning to get in touch with one of you guys for a while. I was wondering if you would ever be on for doing a feature on Dublin clubbing? Pretty good scene here right now. Of course I *would* say that, but for such a small town, the volume and caliber of artists coming through is incredible, not to mention

the world-class summer festivals and the crowd atmosphere, which every visiting act leaves talking about! Anyway, 'tis just an idea I had and if you ever wanted to do it, I'd be happy to be the guide for the weekend!

Take care,
John Mahon, Bodytonic Music, *via the web*

XLR8R Responds:

Hey John,
Not a bad idea at all. We're always on the hunt for killer scenes around the world, and recently featured Auckland, New Zealand for our "Somewhere" segment in Incoming (Issue #96). Keep your eye out for our very special City Issue on stands in October. Who do you think we'll be featuring this year?

Going Postal

Hey, what's up?
My name's Martez and for most of my life I've mainly listened to rap and hip-hop music but I have always been open to different kinds of music. And lately I've really been into a band named "The Postal Service" and I love them but I would like to know if there are any other bands out there that make music similar to theirs, or are they the only ones? Please get back to me if you can.

Tezy, *via the web*

XLR8R Responds:

Hey Martez,
We're always happy to turn people onto new and amazing stuff. If The Postal Service is your thing, check out this issue's reviews of Isan and Couch—definitely along the same lines. And expect big things from Postal Service's Jimmy Tamborello, who releases his James Figurine LP this month on Plug Research. Check back next month, and don't be surprised if we're giving a copy away. Why not hit up INCITE Online at www.xlr8r.com for some new music while you're at it.

The Dankman Cometh

I just wanted to let you know that I dig the new format for the reviews columns. Way cooler this way and makes more sense than tidbit reviews in tiny genre sections. I thought it was funny when I was like, 'Hey, that dude looks like Roy [Dank] with a beard. Oh, hey, that *is* Roy with a beard.' Good stuff.

Take care...
Zeke, *via the web*

CORRECTIONS On Issue #95's Elements page, we incorrectly listed the website for Rocketworld's I.W.G. toys; they are available at www.rocketworld.org.

BJ "BITTER" BASTARD'S "HOW TO" GUIDE

On Friday nights, BJ "Bitter" Bastard usually stays home and knits underwear for the cats. Recently, though, Bastard has decided to be more of a roughneck. Searching the lovely world wide web turned up these media items, which Bastard has been watching and listening to over and over in an attempt to become more street. It hasn't worked yet, but Bastard's definitely learned a few things. Pick these up and learn how to go dumb, get stupid, and be a superfreak with the residents of West Oakland and Luther Campbell himself as your guides.



FREAKY DEAKY

Audiobook: *My Life And Freaky Times* (Luke Records, \$12.99)

How to be a freak: 1) Be born a freak; *or* 2) Hang out with 2 Live Crew frontman Luther Campbell (alias Uncle Luke) and he will turn you into one.

Super-advanced maneuver: Give the entire cast of Jay-Z's music video (including the cameraman and director) head; pull a baby doll out of your *chocha*.

Pros: You get to hang out with NBA players and Mike Tyson; you'll find that you can discuss golden showers as easily as you can the weather.

Cons: There will always be some freak willing to go to freakier lengths than you. www.luke-enterprise.com



SPUN OUT

DVD: *Wildest Sideshows Uncensored* (Fall Thru Entertainment; \$14.95)

How to sideshow: 1) Rally up your friends; 2) Get in your cars, and make sure at least a few people are high; 3) Decide on an intersection as a meeting point; 4) Drive there and form a circle, then take turns doing doughnuts in the middle of it; 5) Stop traffic for hours until cops show up; 6) Pick a new location and start over.

Super-advanced maneuver: Doing more than 13 doughnuts consecutively; stopping traffic on a freeway on-ramp; ghost-riding the whip (driving without sitting in the car).

Pros: Sideshows are super-egalitarian—you can do doughnuts in a beat-up Volvo, crappy minivan, or rental car. If you do doughnuts with the car door open, your friend will fall out.

Cons: Sideshows are dangerous and ear-splitting, which means they are fun to participate in but aggravating and boring to watch on DVD. www.wildestsideshows.com



GO DUMB, AND DUMBER!

DVD: *Hyphy Exposed* (Fall Thru Entertainment; \$14.95)

How to go dumb: 1) Get ridiculously drunk (preferably on Hennessy and some type of energy drink: Hyphy Juice, Red Bull, Monster, etc.); 2) Dance around the middle of the street like a Muppet; 3) Grow dreads and headbang.

Super-advanced maneuver: Dance on top of a moving car, preferably a 1985 Nissan Sentra or similar.

Pros: You're going to be a moron when you're drunk anyway, so "getting stupid" and "going dumb" is just elevating that to another level; it's cheap. **Cons:** Getting really hyphy is cooler when you're 15; in order to really fuck shit up and not get stopped, you have to live somewhere so desolate and desperate that cops refuse to go there (like West Oakland, CA). www.hyphyexposed.com



XLR8R'S "PARTY LIKE IT'S ISSUE #99" CONTEST

Enter to Win His-and-Hers PF Flyers and a Pack of New Music from Mute and Stones Throw.

Well, we're almost there. One more month and the XLR8R party will be in full effect. But until that fêted 100th issue, we're still committed to outfitting you with the latest and greatest, like hot PF Flyers shoes and new tunes from Mute and Stones Throw. First off, snag a copy of cover stars The Knife's haunting *Silent Shout* LP, and then come down with a double-shot of hip-hop and soul action from Aloe Blacc and Dudley Perkins. Their *Shine Through* and *Expressions (2012 A.U.)* LPs score a healthy scoop of praise in this month's reviews section, and are guaranteed to yield some of the summer's hottest tracks. If that's not enough, you and your better half (or your mom or dad, maybe?) will step out in a pair of kicks from the inimitable PF Flyers shoe company. PF Flyers has been lacing you (or your mom or dad, maybe?) with killer kicks since the '40s and '50s, and they continue the grand tradition to this day.

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ONE GRAND PRIZE WINNER will receive his-and-hers pairs of PF Flyers (not necessarily the ones pictured here), and copies of The Knife's *Silent Shout*, Aloe Blacc's *Shine Through*, and Dudley Perkins' *Expressions (2012 A.U.)*.

THREE RUNNERS UP will receive a copy of each of the CDs listed above.

Entries will be accepted via snail mail and email. Entries must be received by August 25, 2006, and don't forget to tell us your requested male and female shoe sizes. Send your answers to XLR8R's "Party Like It's Issue #99 Contest" Contest, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email contest@xlr8r.com with "XLR8R's Party Like It's Issue #99 Contest" in the subject line.



www.stonesthrow.com, www.mute.com, www.pfflyers.com



TIGARAH

A Japanese girl wants to teach the world to sing, one *baile* funk blowout at a time.

Words Patrick Sisson Photo Robin Laananen (www.redhedpictures.com)

On the cover of her self-titled, self-released EP, 24-year-old Tigarah (born Yuko Takabatake) looks like a pop confection, blowing a bubble while clutching chopsticks. She raps and sings in both in Japanese and English so more people can understand her. But she also claims multicultural musical cred, utilizing *baile* funk-inspired beats and citing Baltimore club and grime as influences. Her song “The Game in Rio” (not her only political track) is an anti-globalization screed inspired by the sight of a one-armed beggar in Brazil.

“It’s all cultures mixed together in one musical style,” says Takabatake of her sound. “People can feel the new style. I think it’s great to inspire people, and music is the place to put the message.”

Tigarah’s music—which, according to her website, touches on themes like “fake friends” and “defending your own style”—springs from her experiences at school. A teenager from a privileged background, she entered the political science program at Tokyo’s Keio University seeking to make a difference in the world. But after meeting future politicians in class, she soured on the subject and turned toward music.

“About five years ago, I went to a house party and heard *baile* funk,” she said. “I’d never heard of that kind of music, but I started listening to it and doing my own stuff. At the time, nobody knew about it in Japan. I thought, ‘Maybe if I go to Brazil, I can do something.’”

In 2003, she moved to Rio to study abroad; at a nightclub, she handed Swiss-born DJ/producer Manuel Stagars (who goes by Mr. D) a demo tape. By the time Takabatake headed back to Tokyo a few months later, they had already laid down a number of tracks.

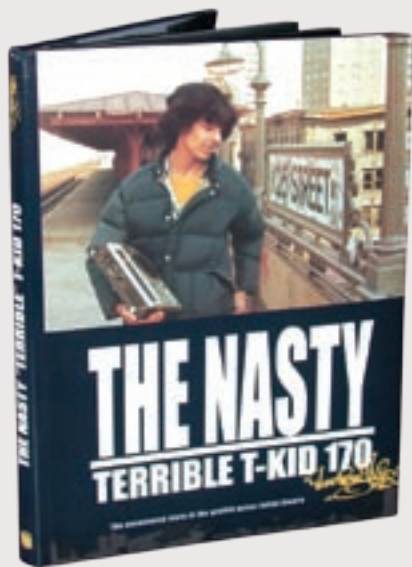
Despite the continental split, they’ve established their own Postal Service-like system. Stagars, who lives in Venice, California, and runs his own studio, makes beats and emails them to Tigarah. After she strings together lyrics and selects a set of tracks, she flies to L.A. for a recording session.

Things began to move at light speed after the swift proliferation of her tunes on MySpace.com and her website (where they stream for free) led to media buzz. The duo spent this summer finishing up an album’s worth of new material to shop around to labels.

If it all looks and sounds like the success story of a certain Sri Lankan-born singer, it should. At her first U.S. gigs in Southern California in April, Tigarah boasted a similar stage setup to M.I.A., with two backup dancers and Stagars spinning beats in the background.

The big difference, Tigarah freely admits, is her unabashed pop sensibility. Tigarah is a tiger, but one as imagined by the Sanrio toy company. It remains to be seen whether audiences will see her as a poster child for *baile* funk’s further globalization or a harbinger of its gentrification. Either way, Tigarah will keep striving to win people over. “I have to do something to make people feel better,” she says, “so I chose music.”

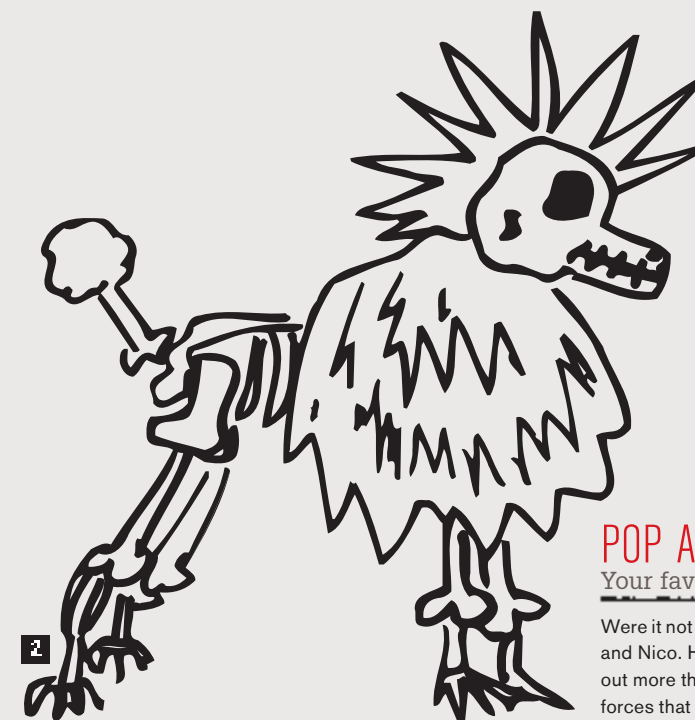
www.tigarah.net



NASTY HABITS

Terrible T-Kid 170 tells all about NYC's graffiti glory days.

In this crazy, mixed-up world where jocks listen to "punk" rock and hip-hop is a billion-dollar industry, it's nice to have serious ass-kicking thugs like Terrible T-Kid 170 to school us about the glory days of New York subway graffiti. Yes, before the internet, up-and-coming writers had to put their life and art on the line in the steel jungles of NYC, without an art school in sight! And if the deadly third rail, cops and guard dogs, rival gangs, and freezing winters didn't get you, chances are some dusted cat in a Black Sabbath jersey would rob you of your paint and weed and kick your ass right out of the train yard. Hollywood will surely get ahold of this stuff one day soon and fuck the story up good, but in the meantime *The Nasty* (Here to Fame; hardcover, \$44.99) contains the real deal from the mouth of a living style innovator...and that's the truth. *Toph One*



POP ART

Your favorite graphic designers try guitars on for size.

Were it not for Andy Warhol's interest in the avant-garde, we'd have no Velvet Underground and Nico. Had the art programs at St. Martin's College and Leeds University not churned out more than just painters and sculptors, Brit pop and post-punk wouldn't be the cultural forces that they became. Does art-pop patronage still exist today? But of course! Here we allot 15 minutes to some of our favorite graphic designers' pet projects. *Ken Taylor*



1. UPSO (A.K.A. DUSTIN AMERY HOSTETLER)

Pet Project: Upso's label, **Pretend**, releases music by **Stylex**, his New Wave outfit, as well as **Golab**, the solo effort of bandmate Joel Roberts. Golab's first disc was composed on vintage synthesizers, Casio keyboards, Nintendo Gameboy, and a variety of acoustic instruments.

How they met: Hostetler and Roberts have been best friends since they were three.

Upso says: "Golab is as weird and catchy as it is haunting. When I listen to *Simplicity Banquet*, I like to imagine it's made by a modern-day version of the Beach Boys, but all with Stevie Wonder heads smashed into one skinny, white dude's body while huffing ether." www.golabgo.com, www.upso.org

2. ANDY MUELLER AND JENNIFER PITT OF THE QUIET LIFE

Pet Project: Naive electro-rock from **The Poo Poodles**, who record 45-second ditties about their lives, kitties, and babies in their basement on very lo-fi equipment.

How they met: The Poo Poodles are Jennifer's sister and brother-in-law. Jennifer was in the band for about five minutes, but due to busy schedules—and perhaps creative differences over the track "Tips are Optional"—they moved ahead without her.

Andy Mueller says: "I know it's different, but that's why I love it. The songs about Freddie Mercury and the one about John Frusciante crack me up." www.poopoodles.com, www.thequietlife.com

3. NIGEL DENNIS OF ELECTRIC HEAT

Pet Project: With an eclectic lineup consisting of Dennis, Todd Miller, and a handful of performers from all over the country, **A Lull**'s slow-core orchestrations are akin to those of Broken Social Scene, Crystal Skulls, Engine Down, and Radiohead.

How they met: "Todd and I have been playing music together since we were about 16 years old," says Dennis. "We have always been two peas in a pod creatively."

Nigel Dennis says: "Our legacy will be praised for days, and our names in stone engraved, always on the tips of tongues, but never ever forgotten. The glory of a victory over everything was one to be celebrated in the streets. Life waited for a moment while the world was in a lull."

www.lujorecords.com, www.electricheat.org

4. WILL SWEENEY OF SILAS

Pet Project: A member of the band **Zongamin**, created by Susumu Mukai while at The Royal College of Art in the late '90s. Their oddball-disco instrumental sound features two guitars, bass, percussion, drums, and a large array of samples, keyboards, and percussion. They always play on Halloween.

How they met: Mukai and Sweeney became friends through a shared obsession with dark, detailed comic art, guitar noise, and escapism. Sweeney was asked to join the band because of his large collection of effects pedals.

Will Sweeney says: "The Zongamin band is a unique clockwork quintet masterminded by a shadowy genius, preparing for world domination in a large house in Maldine Square."

www.beggars.com/us/zongamin, www.willsweeney.com



WILD STYLE

Greedy Genius sneakers aren't for the faint of foot.

Wild colorways, embroidery, snakeskin, colored laces. If you like your shoes to do the talking for you, Greedy Genius might be your new favorite brand. Inspired by luxury lines and the Japanese market, Genius was conceived in August 2005 by four partners: Nick Loftis and Brandon Chang (who met surfing sneaker chat rooms) and close friends and streetwear designers Mikhayel Tesfaye and Hue. The bi-coastal quartet dreams up sneakers based on hip-hop and street inspirations; the Phantom takes cues from the '90s reflective tech look (North Face purple puffers!) and old-school Polo gear, while the brown and green Beef-N-Broccoli model riffs on Timberland boots and Chinese take-out. Runs are limited to 500 per style and each pair costs about \$120-\$180—sneaker fiends, step up. *Tyra Bangs*
Greedy Genius is available at Union and Greyone in L.A. and Barney's in New York. www.greedygenius.com

Greedy Genius shoes (top to bottom): Primo with Cobalt Blue colorway; Phantom with The King of Sneakers colorway; Phantom with Strawberry Shortcake colorway



7L & ESOTERIC

Boston hip-hop vets take a new path to dopeness.
Words Jesse Serwer Photo A. Garcia

In the world of underground hip-hop—where purity is God and progression is often looked upon with scorn—it's quite rare to see artists ditch the formula with which they've made their name. But *A New Dope*, the fourth LP from Boston-based MC/DJ combo 7L & Esoteric, finds the duo engineering a stylistic switch-up of the highest order.

"In addition to keeping our fanbase entertained, we wanted to keep ourselves entertained with this record," says MC Esoteric. "It kind of feels like we cranked the same record out the past few at bats. I would definitely say this is the best example of us that we have given anybody."

Where previous LPs like 2001's *The Soul Purpose* and 2004's *DC2: Bars of Death* were backpacker-friendly combinations of boom-bap beats and battle-style rhymes, *A New Dope* finds the pair (who've been around since 1992) dabbling in leftfield, electro-fied tracks that owe more to '83 than '93,

even delving into the 120-bpm range. The stew of recognizable yet unusual samples—including pieces of Suicide's electro-punk classic "Girl" ("3 Minute Classic"), Angelo Badalamenti's theme to cult TV show *Twin Peaks* ("Perfect Person"), and the Serge Gainsbourg/Brigitte Bardot duet "Bonnie And Clyde" ("Everywhere")—evokes the Dust Brothers' work on the Beastie Boys' *Paul's Boutique*.

Esoteric, taking his first ever stab at production, made nearly half the beats and set the tone for the album with some early homemade demos, according to 7L. "The first couple of tracks he played me were faster than anything we've done before and I could tell he was really comfortable with rhyming over that speed," says the DJ/producer. "We were both working on stuff independently that, in the back of our minds, [we thought each other] wouldn't like. But we both really liked what each other was doing and we ran with it. Every song we made, we kept. We didn't really

sweat it, thinking, 'People aren't going to like this.' This was by far the fastest we ever made an album."

Esoteric's lyrics display a similarly carefree attitude. He often sounds like a smartass Jay-Z with a *retahded* Boston accent, whether rapping about incompatibility with a girlfriend ("Perfect Person") or criticizing religion ("Everywhere"). On "Girls Gone Wild," the 31-year-old asks his mom why she couldn't have had him later so he could have come of age in today's era of, um, sluttier girls.

"I know the typical underground kid is going to hate it," Eso says of the album, the group's second for Babygrande Records. "But we don't really care what those kids think. We're just doing it for ourselves. That sounds cliché, but it's really true. Our fans are going to hear this record and say, 'What the fuck are these guys doing?'"

7L & Esoteric's *A New Dope* is out now on Babygrande.
www.7L-esoteric.com, www.babygrande.com.

WHERE YOU AT

IT AINT WHERE YOU FROM



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"Where You At?"

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www.mimoco.com

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www.breakbeatsscience.com

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www.wresoldout.com

8Track shoe by C1rca (\$60)
www.c1rca.com

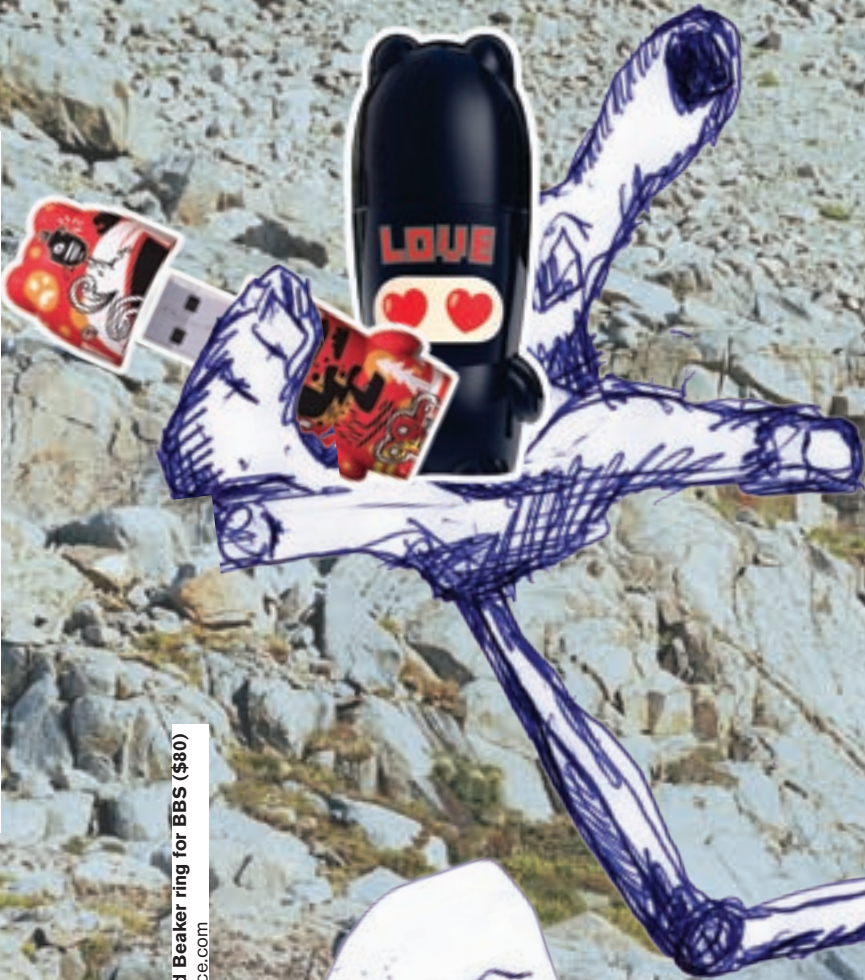
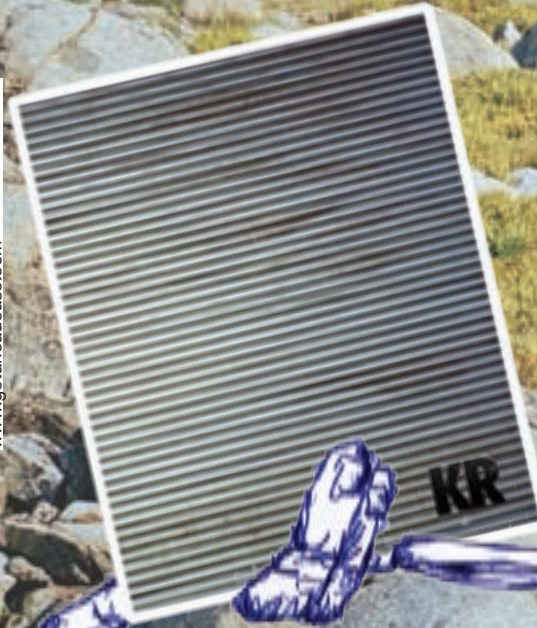
Metropolis messenger bag by Chrome (\$130)
www.chromebags.com

Background photo by Christopher Woodcock (www.wphotography.com)

Headcase custom headphone case (\$20)
www.gettheadcase.com

KR Book from Also Known As (\$28)
www.fourthehardway.com

Pins hoodie by C1rca (\$60)
www.c1rca.com





HOLY FUCK

Toronto's noise/dance agitators don't write songs and refuse to practice.

Words Bryan Borzykowski Illustration Trophy

Holy Fuck, as founder Brian Borchardt likes to say, is all about "chaos." The noise/dance outfit's mission statement involves "no songwriting" and no practicing, and if someone can't make a gig, they'd rather recruit a new band member than cancel a show. The four core members come from rock backgrounds—Borchardt was in party rockers By Divine Right, Kevin Lynn in the dubby King Cobb Steelie—but they consciously stay away from guitars and avoid anything that resembles pop. They also vehemently reject laptops and samplers, instead creating their dirty, droney dance rock with kids' toys, odd keyboards, and a 35mm film synchronizer.

On the band's self-titled disc, released last year, the bleeps, blips, fuzz, and heavy, ass-shaking drums sound cohesive but really, they're not. Actually, Holy Fuck is always seconds away from self-destructing. "There are moments when I lis-

ten back to the record where I think, "Why aren't we changing right here?" says Borchardt. "We were all in the studio looking at each other, wondering 'What do we do now?'"

Despite all the bedlam, the band always ends their jams safely. How do they pull it off? Trust. Borchardt and his bandmates—fellow keyboardist Graham Welsh, drummer Glenn Milchem, and bassist Kevin Lynn—have been playing together long enough to know that, whatever happens during a song, they'll always be in sync at the end. If there's a lack of certainty—which occasionally happens when someone new fills in—the band is always at risk of crashing and burning. "If we have someone playing with us who's too much of a pain in the ass, we're not going to want to work with him again," says Borchardt. "It would fuck up the set."

As Holy Fuck acquires more and more fans across North America—including leftfield rapper

Beans, who hired them as his backing band on a recent tour—they feel pressure to reign in the mayhem. Borchardt says they've managed to cut down some of their six-minute jams to three and they're not as keen to play a gig without their regular lineup anymore. But although forces are compelling them to rework the band's mission statement, Holy Fuck is not ready to start practicing just yet.

"You wonder if people really understand that you are chaos rolling into town," says Borchardt. "Not everybody likes chaos. As the expectations for the band keep growing, you don't want to let people down, but you don't want to compromise your vision. I think we've done a pretty good job at playing a lot, getting tight, but still doing what we set out to do."

Holy Fuck's self-titled debut is out now on *Dependent*.

www.holyfuckmusic.com

Roland
www.rolandus.com



MODERN CLASSIC

JUNO-G: Synthesizer Look familiar? True to its heritage, the new JUNO-G is affordable and user-friendly. But that's where the comparisons to yesteryear end. This modern marvel packs a studio's worth of sound, sequencing, and audio recording into one amazing instrument. Sharing the same high-powered processor as Roland's famous Fantom-X series, the JUNO-G puts a world of first-class sound and performance features under musicians' fingertips. Add more sounds via SRX expansion and create complete songs with the onboard audio/MIDI recorder. The JUNO-G — your future classic!



The Juno-G ships with editing software (Mac OS X, Win XP/2000) that lets you perform serious patch and sample-editing tasks on your large computer monitor.



Touch and Go owner and founder Corey Rusk, age 17, at Multitrac Studio in Detroit, where his band The Necros recorded a portion of their album *Conquest For Death*.

BORN FREE

Venerable Midwest imprint Touch and Go celebrates 25 years.

"When I got involved doing this stuff I never imagined that, 25 years later, we'd still be doing this," says Corey Rusk, owner of influential Chicago imprint Touch and Go. The label, which celebrates its 25th anniversary in September, was started in late 1980; named after a Michigan music fanzine, its first release was a four-song 7" by Rusk's punk band, The Necros. The outfit slowly expanded, releasing other Midwest hardcore bands like The Meatmen, Negative Approach, and Big Black while Rusk gained extra experience running an all-ages club in Detroit during the mid-'80s called The Graystone, booking seminal bands like Black Flag and The Minutemen. T&G remains true to punk's ethic—and continues to offer artists an impressive 50/50 profit split—but has surprised everyone in recent years with a roster that includes Jesus Lizard, Slint, Blonde Redhead, !!!, Supersystem, and TV on the Radio. Rusk's clearly got reason to celebrate, and if you're in the Windy City you should join him. The label is throwing a weekend-long anniversary and block party at Chicago venue The Hideout from September 8-10, featuring 25 current and former label acts including Shellac, Ted Leo & the Pharmacists, and Scratch Acid. *Patrick Sisson*
www.tgrec.com



Top: Tragedy Khadafi; Bottom row: Tragedy director Booker Sim and the movie poster for *Tragedy: The Story of Queensbridge* (Photos by Boogie)



REAL-LIFE TRAGEDY

An Unsung Rapper And His Infamous Hood Get The Doc Treatment.

While documenting the bloody Liberian civil war, guerrilla filmmaker Booker Sim found himself obsessed with Capone-N-Noreaga's *The War Report*, a hip-hop album that drew complex parallels between crime in New York City's housing projects and third-world geopolitics. "That album was a way to not just have other people look at the 'hood but to get people in the 'hood to look at the rest of the world, and start connecting it thematically," says the 32-year-old Ottawa, ON native.

Drawn to New York in the late '90s by the promise of a possible feature film project with Prodigy of Mobb Deep, Sim instead emerged more than five years later with a documentary about another legendary Queensbridge rapper—and the actual architect of CNN's *The War Report*—Tragedy (a.k.a. Tragedy Khadafi). Shot over the course of two years, *Tragedy: The Story of Queensbridge* tells the story of the world's largest housing project—and the home of one of hip-hop's richest legacies—through the troubled life of the seminal but largely unsung MC.

Though not as revered as other QB rappers like Nas, Mobb Deep, or even Craig G, Trag's life was made for cinema. His hustler father was murdered before he was born and his mother became a crack addict, leading a pre-pubescent Tragedy to fend for himself before being stabbed and thrown in the East River by local gangsters. After hooking up with Marley

Marl, he was sent to Rikers Island at 16, just as the Juice Crew was becoming New York's pre-eminent hip-hop unit. Though he scored a few successes, like his 1990 LP as Intelligent Hoodlum, life-threatening situations and missed opportunities (a dispute with NORE ended his CNN affiliation following *The War Report*) have been far more typical.

"Tragedy probably knows 50-80 people who have been murdered," Sim explains. "He lived the whole '80s thug life that a lot of these other QB artists—who were barely eating cookies then—rap about."

But telling the elusive rapper's story proved difficult: Tragedy was busted (while patching things up with NORE in Union Square) and thrown in jail right before filming was set to start. Although Trag appears in jailhouse interviews and a handful of other scenes, Sim was forced to tell the story largely through the eyes of longtime acquaintances like Clarence "Uncle La" Shack (uncle of Mobb Deep's Havoc) and Poppa Mobb, a QB OG who took in young Tragedy as a son.

While Sim received some flack for not showing Queensbridge in a more positive light, he plans to continue documenting the community via *The Legacy*, a TV series about the next generation of QB rappers he's developing with Uncle La and Peter Spirer, director of *Beef and Rhyme and Reason*. *Jesse Serwer*
www.tragedymovie.com



1



2



3

GOOD STUFF

A few of Wendy Yao's favorite things.

When I was 18, Wendy Yao was the shit. She was only 17, and she was the drummer in all-girl indie punk trio Emily's Sassy Lime, who had a record out (*Desperate, Scared but Social*) on Kill Rock Stars. Nearly 10 years later, Wendy is still the shit. After graduating from Stanford, she set up shop in L.A.'s Chinatown, where she can be found DJing at Mountain Bar, hanging out at China Art Objects (a gallery her older sister, clothing designer and former ESL bandmate Amy, helped found), or behind the counter at her boutique, Ooga Booga (943 N. Broadway, #203, Los Angeles; (213) 617-1105). The store stocks Mended Veil, Dogg and Pony, and PAM along with posters, zines, and ephemera from artist friends like Chris Johanson, Becca Albee, and Cory Arcangel. Despite being busy throwing a record release party for the band Holy Shit, Wendy found the time to tell us about her favorite items in the store. *Vivian Host*
www.oogaboogastore.com

1. KEEP "BENTEN" SHOE (\$89)

These cute and comfortable canvas deck shoes are from Keep's debut Spring 2006 collection. Keep is the raddest new L.A.-based women's shoe & clothing company by Una Kim and Margot Jacobs. They make smart, unpatronizing designs in brilliant colorways that guys covet (like, they want their own pairs). These are perfect summer shoes—for the beach, roadtripping, hot summer barbecues, and late-night dance parties.
www.keepcompany.com

2. LIFT BOYS "LIFT BOYZ" 12" VINYL (\$10)

Lift Boys is one of many solo projects by Yamataka Eye of The Boredoms. This 12", pressed by Brown Sounds in conjunction with his solo art show at Gavin Brown's Passerby Gallery in NYC last year, is Eye's second release under this name, and falls sonically along the lines of his DJ Pica Pica Pica mixtape. Here he re-edits different disco/house tracks, adding his own saturated bursts and layers of sound to create four intoxicatingly fun dance tracks with crazy rooster crows, whistles, and call-and-response parts.

3. MARK LECKEY 7 WINDMILL STREET W1 (\$35)

This book by British artist/musician Mark Leckey (published by Switzerland's JRP Ringier) covers his diverse body of work and creative interests, including dance-hall/club culture, urban history, and 19th-century aesthetes. What results are stunning sculptural soundsystems through which he blasts his own dubplates; one such installation musically traces a walk along the perimeter of London's Soho. Also check his 1999 film *Fiorucci Made Me Hardcore*.
www.jrp-ringier.com



SUNSHINE

Kingston's reggae/dancehall matriarch reps the ladies on air and behind the mixing desk.

Words Sarah Bentley Photo Debbie Bragg (www.everynight.co.uk)

"I'm your Sunshine girl. Lock and come in. I'll be keeping things irie all afternoon." At 2 p.m. every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, DJ Sunshine's upbeat introduction rings out across the island and the internet on Irie FM, Jamaica's first 24/7 reggae-only radio station.

Irie is known as "the people's station." Launched in 1990, its reggae-only formula was predicted to fail by the American-culture-obsessed middle class that dominates the Jamaican media. Its huge success in just a few months flipped the script of Jamaican broadcasting, paving the way for local music and culture to finally get official recognition.

Playing on Irie FM is a huge privilege, and on-air personality Sunshine puts a sublime spin on the honor. The Jam—her three-hour-long selection of old school dancehall and current hits—is a refreshing take on the genre, one that ditches its trademark machismo and self-aggrandizing prattle.

In addition to riding the airwaves, Sunshine (born Katrina Irons) is also the only female to have achieved any success in the testosterone-charged

world of dancehall/reggae production—tracks on her firing Sunblock, Justice, and Real Life riddims have hit top 10 in global reggae charts. But where are all the other ladies?

"There are other female radio jocks but it's male-dominated," reasons 33-year-old Sunshine. "Production-wise, more are there, they're just not getting breaks. Studio life is nightlife. If you have a boyfriend or children, it's gonna be hard."

"And," she raises her eyebrow confidentially, "the artists aren't professional. They don't show up and it burns up your studio time. When they do come, they want to vibe. A guy can flex with an artist, smoke and drink. Women are either not invited to do that with them, or aren't prepared to do that, so the waiting around is very frustrating."

Although she won't divulge any names, Sunshine once waited five hours for a well-known Boboshanti deejay to turn up to voice. When he arrived, she expressed her frustrations and the artist promptly took off. "I've learnt to hold it

down until after a session. Get the recording, *bun* them for being late after."

Despite her international kudos as an Irie FM DJ, getting artists to voice atop her Sunblock riddim was particularly hard. "They thought I was hustling," she recalls. "That I wasn't serious about it and it was something I'd take up today and drop tomorrow. For women without any introduction into the business, it's 100 times harder still."

But Sunshine has an enterprising flair. "You have to have your hand in many pies," she explains. "I'm a radio DJ, club DJ, producer, artist manager, and owner of a clothing store. To be a success in Jamaica you need dogged determination. You can't just be good at what you do, but [you have to be] exceptional at that, and 10 other things. That's Jamaica."

Sunshine's riddims are available on her Yellow Moon label, and *Rhythm Album #69: Sunblock* is out now on Greensleeves. www.greensleeves.net, www.irielfm.net

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SÃO NECESSARY

XLR8R translates six of the best new acts from Brazil.

Every year, American music fans are hoodwinked into listening to the newest crop of over-hyped UK bands, slavishly championed by *NME* and rarely worth the time. Looking for some more deserving audio imports? Follow Diplo's lead to Brazil, where a rich heritage of tropicália, samba, and funk has mutated into myriad new styles and songs. A new generation of artists is kicking out more than just *baile* funk—take your eyes off the Carnival dancers and focus on these six acts. *Patrick Sisson*



CANSEI DE SER SEXY ("TIRED OF BEING SEXY")

Latest Release: Self-titled debut on Sub Pop
How They Party: Over-sexed Brazilian art school students from São Paulo pump out snarky, sweaty electro-pop tracks like "Art Bitch" and "Meeting Paris Hilton."
Interesting pop reference: "Let's Make Love and Listen to Death From Above" is about getting busy to DFA1979.
www.subpop.com



SEU JORGE

Latest Release: *The Life Aquatic Studio Sessions* (Hollywood)
How He Parties: A folksy singer-songwriter (who takes hairstyling cues from Coolio) with a strong samba influence, Rio-based Jorge pens sparse tracks that highlight his rich, deep voice.
Interesting Cover: He anointed himself the Brazilian Bowie after covering the legend's songs in filmmaker Wes Anderson's *The Life Aquatic*.
www.seujorge.com



CURUMIN ("LITTLE BOY")

Latest Release: *Achados E Perdidos* (Quannum)
How He Parties: Born Luciano Nakata Albuquerque, this baby-faced musical prodigy updates swaying '70s Brazilian sounds with flourishes of hip-hop and electronic composition.
Interesting Cover: A version of Stevie Wonder's protest track "You Haven't Done Nothing"
www.quannum.com



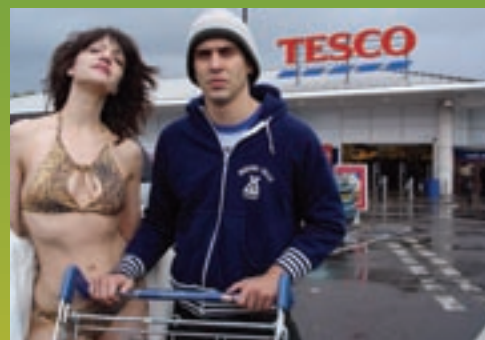
BONDE DO ROLE ("THE ROLLERCOASTER BAND")

Latest Release: Self-titled EP on Diplo's Mad Decent label
How They Party: The trio of DJ/MC Rodrigo Gorky, MC Marina Ribatski, and MC Pedro D'eyrot—hailing from Curitiba, in Southern Brazil—drops relentless speak 'n' shout Portuguese lyrics over boisterous beats and borrowed guitar riffs.
Interesting Pop Reference: They sampled Alice in Chains on the song "Melo Do Tabaco."
www.maddecent.com



CIBELLE

Latest Release: *The Shine of Dried Electric Leaves* (Six Degrees)
How She Parties: Originally from São Paulo (now living in London), this cute and challenging chanteuse pairs nightclub-ready vocals with languid strings and atmospheric, Tom Waits-like production.
Interesting Cover: She performed Caetano Veloso's "London London" with freak-folk king Devendra Banhart on last album.
www.sixdegreesrecords.com



TETINE

Last Release: *L.I.C.K. My Favela* (Slum Dunk)
How They Party: Also living in London, ex-pat performance art punks Bruno Verner and Eliete Mejorado (who head up the Slum Dunk collective) mix *baile* funk beats with fat and filthy synthesizer squelches.
Interesting Pop Reference: They compiled *The Sexual Life of the Savages*, a set of '80s Brazilian post-punk, for the Soul Jazz label.
www.tetine.net



While everyone else is getting stupid, one Bay Area badass goes dumb intelligent.

Words Ross Hogg Photo Beryl Fine

It's tempting to pigeonhole Trackademicks (a.k.a. Jason Valerio) as just another one of the Bay Area's hyphy beatmakers. He produced a third of Mistah F.A.B.'s *Son of a Pimp* LP and his (re)mix tapes—*Trackademicks: The Remixes* and *Spring Progress Report* (the latter of which finds him rhyming on half the tracks)—feature his reinterpretations of songs by hyphy heavyweights E-40 and Keak Da Sneak.

"Hyphy is basically one piece of the puzzle," says Valerio. "[Growing up], I bumped 3X Krazy and Hobo Junction, felt Souls of Mischief and Get Low Playas. Before all of that, I was into '80s music like Tears for Fears and Wham! After I had my revelation [while] listening to Esthero's *Breath from Another*, [thanks to Whiz Kid, Valerio's co-MC and right-hand man], I got into electronic music. *Breath...* was a perfect blend of rock, hip-hop, drum & bass, reggae, and Afro-Latin sounds. I want to bridge a lot of the sounds that I grew up on as successfully as that album did."

Trackademicks isn't from Oakland. He's from Alameda, the town next to *the town*, and his sound is damn near its own movement. On *Trackademicks: The Remixes*, he takes Keak's midtempo slumper "White T-Shirt, Blue Jeans and Nikes" and transforms it into 120 bpm of broken beat that mix seamlessly with his deft reworking of Jill Scott's "Golden." On his insane remix of Yummy Bingham's "Come Get It"—an ingenious journey through a relentless array of time signatures—he rhymes: "*So if you don't cut class like Matthew Broderick/I might pop ya collar with an honor roll scholarship.*"

In a playful jab at the "Go dumb" sentiment currently ruling the Bay airwaves, Valerio refers to his own style as "dumb intelligence." "It's not to say that there's anything wrong with going dumb," he explains. "[Dumb intelligence] just refers to me as an artist and how I choose to make my music. I don't just make beats; I try to bridge gaps, connect cultures—whether ethnic, regional, or musical."

When asked who he'd like to work with, the Cool Collar Scholar rattles off: "Raphael Saadiq, The Neptunes, Kenna, M.I.A., Bloc Party, Loose Ends, Tears for Fears, Teedra Moses, E-40, Outkast—hella too many to name." But he's not content with idle wishing—he's on his grind. He's currently working on tracks for Mistah F.A.B.'s next album, *The Yellow Bus Rydah*, recently completed work with Lyrics Born and Joyo Velarde, and is putting together another (re)mix tape to be released via his website, while working on his own album. He's also creating a buzz with his slick remix of E-40's "Tell Me When To Go," which scraps the original's dark thump in favor of a playful melody complete with a women's choir.

"I want to make music like me," he explains. "I'm half-black/half-Filipino, with a bunch of other stuff. I've never been able to kick it with just one group of people. My style comes from the fact that I want to bring all those folks together and party."
www.trackademicks.com



house in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The menu includes eight flavors of the KISS Frozen Rockuccino and a signature coffee called Demon Dark Roast. • Bay Area band **Deerhoof** recently turned down bargain shoe chain Payless when they asked to use the band's "Twin Killers" song in a commercial; guitarist Chris Cohen has also quit the band to play full-time with his other project, **The Curtains**. • **Drop The Lime** has a new crew and imprint: Trouble & Bass. The collective—dedicated to grime, rough 4x4s, and other bass-heavy music—recently released its first 12" (DTL's "Bricks" b/w **Mathhead's** "Slamdance"). Visit www.troubleandbass.com. • This fall, powerHouse will release books including *U.F.O.*, a document of the elusive NY graffiti writer, and *It's All Good*, featuring gripping photographs of ghetto life by **XLR8R** contributor **Boogie**. February 2007 will see the release of a book on female graf writer **Claw** entitled *Bombshell: The Life and Crimes of Claw Money*. • L.A.'s eight-year-strong drum & bass night **Respect** relaunched their website, with downloadable live sets from **Bailey, Suv, and Loxy & Ink**, among others. Call for the rewind at www.respectdrumandbass.com. • Dream analysis, a new track every day, and online doughnut ordering available at www.dreamchimney.com. • Check out beautiful Polaroid photography at www.plrds.com. • And we're ghost...

SPIN CYCLE
News and gossip from the music world

Maureen Yancey, mother of the late Jay Dee, has formed the **J Dilla Foundation** to raise funds for lupus research and provide arts training to underprivileged youth. Find them at www.jdilla.org. • **Ableton and M-Audio** sponsor a monthly showcase for up-and-coming hip-hop and R&B producers in New York. Winners receive gear prizes and links to the industry's top A&R people and producers. Visit www.ableton.com/producers-showcase for info. • Go grapple: The Bay has a new energy drink called **Hyphy Juice**, shouted out by its own theme song, The Team's "Hyphy Juice." It tastes of "grapple," a mix of grape and apple. • Congratulations to Portland electronic label **Audraglint**, who celebrated their five-year anniversary in July with a compilation called *Silverware*, featuring **Nudge, Tarwater, and Charles Atlas**. • Speaking of Portland, it is the location of the third *Burn To Shine* DVD, out August 22; visit www.trixiedvd.com. • **DVS** recently collaborated with five skateboard photographers—**Ben Cohen, Gabe Morford, Giovanni Reda, Mike O'Meally, and Atiba Jefferson**—to create special editions of the company's skate shoes. Each will come with a series of five collector's postcards; in addi-

tion, **DVS** will publish a limited edition book. • Ed Banger's hip-hop mastermind **Mr. Flash** will release his first album, *Smuggler*, in early 2007. • No release date on **DJ Shadow's** new album, but he has revealed that it will be called *The Outsider* and will feature guest spots from **Q-Tip, David Banner, Keak Da Sneak, and Turf Talk**. On his online journal at www.djshadow.com, he promised it will be a "risky record," with songs he thinks "will blow away almost anything else [he's] ever done." • The line-up for Texas' **Austin City Limits** festival, held September 15-17 at Zilker Park, will include **I Love You But I've Chosen Darkness, Jose Gonzales, The Shins, Massive Attack, and Explosions In The Sky**, among many others. • Danish techno powerhouse **Trentemøller** will have a new album out in October on Pokerflat; rumor has it he's been working with Kitty-Yo's techno pop dude **Richard Davis** on a few tracks. • After a two-year hiatus, Berlin's **Love Parade** relaunched on July 15 with 40 mobile soundsystems and peak-time sets at the Sieghessäule by **Ricardo Villalobos, Westbam, and Ewan Pearson**. • No strangers to shameless self-promotion, rock band **KISS** licensed rights to the first KISS coffee-

1. Deerhoof; 2. I Love You But I've Chosen Darkness (photo by Adam Valdez); 3. KISS coffeehouse; 4. Loxy; 5. DVS collector's shoes; 6. Trentmøller



SEVEN L ★ ESOTERIC
A NEW DOPE

"...hits from out of nowhere with electro-fied beats ...and savvy rhymes" - **Xlr8r Magazine**

"...the duo is at their best...a blogger's wet dream" - **CMJ**

Includes "Play Dumb" & "Daisycutta" feat. Kool Keith
Album Produced Entirely By: 7L & Esoteric

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www.7l-esoteric.com • www.myspace.com/7lesoteric • www.babygrande.com



DNK MMS

Swedish electro-pop duo The Knife goes in search of the sublime.

WORDS: PHILIP SHERBURNE PHOTOS: ELIN BERGE
TYPE AND ILLUSTRATION: DARREN BOOTH

It's been a while since "faceless techno bollocks" ruled electronic music; aside from a few renegades like Narod Niki and Rex the Dog, most dance-music artists seem to have torn off their masks sometime around the rise of the superstar DJ. But with their new album *Silent Shout*, The Knife has revived the ideology of anonymity, converting themselves from an unsettlingly chirpy electro-pop duo into one of the more darkly intriguing propositions in post-techno.

To be sure, the Swedish act isn't anonymous—it's a brother-sister duo, he six years the younger, with a growing indie label, Rabid, and budding solo careers to boot—but despite the intriguing back story, *Silent Shout* throws a veil of mystery over Karin and Olof Dreier, from the crow



“We wanted to get inside our heads and do something about how society affects you inside.”

—Karin Dreier



masks worn in their press photos to their diversionary media tactics. (Olof has been known to conduct his interviews speaking through a vocoder.) Despite the ultra-modernity of their sound—arpeggios glisten and drum patches ring like struck glass, thanks to meticulous FM synthesis and the hot analog spark of the MachineDrum, their preferred drum unit—there’s something both vintage and timeless as well. It’s a confused kind of myth-time, conjuring sea shanties and forest families, robotic steel drums and the grumbling of the earth itself. Taken alongside its accompanying videos and live show, *Silent Shout* feels less like a mere album and more like an ancient song cycle at the heart of some vast, multimedia fairytale where a modern-day Hansel and Gretel walk hand-in-hand from the glassy, bureaucratic world of the contemporary EU into a magic wood where monsters still live—and only synthesizers can slay them.

IN TOO DEEP

The Knife’s last album, 2003’s *Deep Cuts*, was far different. Best known for the single “Heartbeats”—famously remixed by Rex the Dog and even more famously featured, in an acoustic cover by José Gonzalez, in a Sony Bravia commercial—*Deep Cuts* sounded more or less in line with early ’00s electro-pop, though odd instrumentation, cryptic lyrics, and Karin’s tortured inflections suggested that The Knife was far more than just another shaving off electroclash’s metal blade. It was a relatively sunny affair, though repeated listens revealed something unsettling beneath the Europop sheen, especially when Karin’s vocals vaulted from pop sloganeering into the realm of coded manifestos: “*We are the people who’ve come here today/I don’t like it easy, I don’t like it the straight way/We’re in the middle of something, we’re here to stay/And we raise our heads/For the color red...*”

“*Deep Cuts* was much more about social questions,” explains Karin. “But this time we wanted to get inside our heads and do something about how society affects you *inside*. We wanted to work in a more mental way.” Lyrics like those to “Forest Families” bear this out. Over a galloping, virtually beatless trance arpeggio—one that has the strange effect of making trance seem like a *good* idea, for once—Karin recounts facts so banal they could be culled from a documentary: “*So far away from the city/Some kids left on their own.*” As she continues, surrealism quickly takes over: “*They say we had a Communist in the family/I had to wear a mask.*” With every new, unnamed character, the scene becomes more and more Kafkaesque. “*I saw her by the organ/She was laughing while pressing the keys/She said my favorite book was dirty and/You should not show you can read.*” It’s hard to say exactly *what* the song is... Psychodrama? Political thriller?

“I think it’s quite singer/songwritery, really,” says Karin. “In all songs, you go into some kind of character. You have some story you want to tell, and you try to find that specific person who tells it best. When you find the voice, that’s when you finish the

lyrics as well.” Interestingly, Karin cites The Pixies’ Frank Black as one of her favorite lyricists, which makes sense when you consider the tangled yarns he spins, syllables often trumping strict interpretation. “He writes in a way that takes very strange turns on you,” says Karin. “As a Swedish person, you don’t really understand all the words when you first hear them—but they *sound* really good.”

HEARING VOICES

Much of *Silent Shout*’s curious, ominous sound is achieved by copious vocal processing, harmonizing, and multitracking of Karin’s voice, eroding the idea of a single voice, or even one identifiable as male or female. The strategy isn’t purely sonic. “With the choirs we tried to do something to maximize expression—sometimes you need to use as many voices as you can,” says Karin, suggesting that social theory is as important as knob-twisting in defining The Knife’s idiosyncratic sound.

“I think first we really want to work with the voice as an instrument,” continues Karin. “And when you use modern techniques there are no limits. But at the same time I think it’s quite interesting for me as a woman to sing in very different ways—as a man sometimes, or very androgynous sometimes. Normally a woman is not really allowed or accepted to use her voice in so many ways; it’s either singer/songwriter or punk.” The Knife, in contrast, manages not only to slice through neat binaries but to dice them into a million little pieces.

Maybe it’s for this reason that Olof resists critics’ categorization of The Knife as sinister or spooky. “I don’t see [our music] as so dark,” he says. “For me it’s quite normal. I see it as more melancholic, more like

a deserted, empty kind of feeling—and quite close to nature, with almost a new age touch to it. Sometimes the voice can sound scary, but we just try to create these characters [that] you can't really tell where they are or what they are like. I don't really have enough distance from the album yet, but I don't know if it's so dark...I think it's more white." Which sounds like a contradiction, until you consider something like Swans' *White Light from the Mouth of Infinity*, which similarly explodes shadowy inner space into a kind of collective sublime. Even more relevant might be the "white blindness" that affects the characters in José Saramago's novel *Blindness*, crippling the world in a chain reaction of private whiteouts.

MYTH MAKERS

The Knife does follow a fairly strict division of labor, however. "From the beginning, the main partition has always been that Karin writes the lyrics and sings," explains Olof, and Karin verifies his assessment. "I've never written any lyrics," he continues. "I don't even understand the content of Karin's. She's never done a beat"—though Karin, notably, is quicker to reel off the list of the band's gear. "But everything in between, we do together. When we started with the first album and *Deep Cuts* we worked very equally, choosing sounds and making sounds together. On *Deep Cuts* we wanted to have very democratic sounds that everyone can have. But on the new album the division isn't so equal, it's more like I've nerded into the sounds a bit more and Karin has been off on her own, writing."

Indeed, one gets the sense that The Knife's double blade is peeling apart. Olof recently relocated to Berlin to pursue a solo career DJing and crafting straightforward techno, while Karin remains in Sweden—though the duo's recent spate of arresting multimedia live shows gave them plenty of time together, rehearsing and touring. The shows will continue—when promoters can afford the band's surround-sound, audio/visual, theatrical setup—but after the remainder of *Silent Shout*'s singles and remixes, the music may run dry for a bit. "I think we'll have a break of about five years," says Olof. "We've worked together quite intensely for seven years, and we've always had three years between albums—so it's not such a big step to go up to five."

Speaking to The Knife—each member in different cities, each one taking a 20-minute, solo phone-interview slot—one senses that their internal push-and-pull is part of what makes the music work so well, part of what instills it with such delicious (and disturbing) friction. "It's okay," says Olof of working in a brother/sister duo. "You know each other very well, but at the same time you don't; it's easy to forget to be polite. And politeness is kind of a part of you when you meet other people." Of course, "polite" is the last thing you'd think to call The Knife's music, which is precisely its strong point. The sounds and voices come from everywhere at once, a constantly mutating din always verging on chaos. Civil perhaps, and certainly sympathetic—in the best European socialist tradition—but above all quietly anarchic, *Silent Shout* creates a world to which each listener belongs, re-shaping its myth with every replay.

The Knife's *Silent Shout* is out now on Mute Records.

www.theknife.net, www.mute.com



THIS KNIFE CUTS RUGS

Techno's finest turn out the band's most banging remixes.

With an enviable compositional focus and ability, The Knife crafts not mere tracks but killer songs. But that hasn't kept their music from fueling adventurous dance-floors over the past several years, especially in remixed form.

HEARTBEATS (REX THE DOG REMIX) (RABID)

Hollowing out the track to a minimalist bump, London's faceless canine speeds up The Knife's most famous tune to an electro-disco grind, loops Karin's vocals in cl-cl-classic old-skool style, and saves the big guns—the original song's steely sheets of synth—for the last euphoric minute.

PASS THIS ON (M.A.N.D.Y. KNIFER REMIX) (RABID)

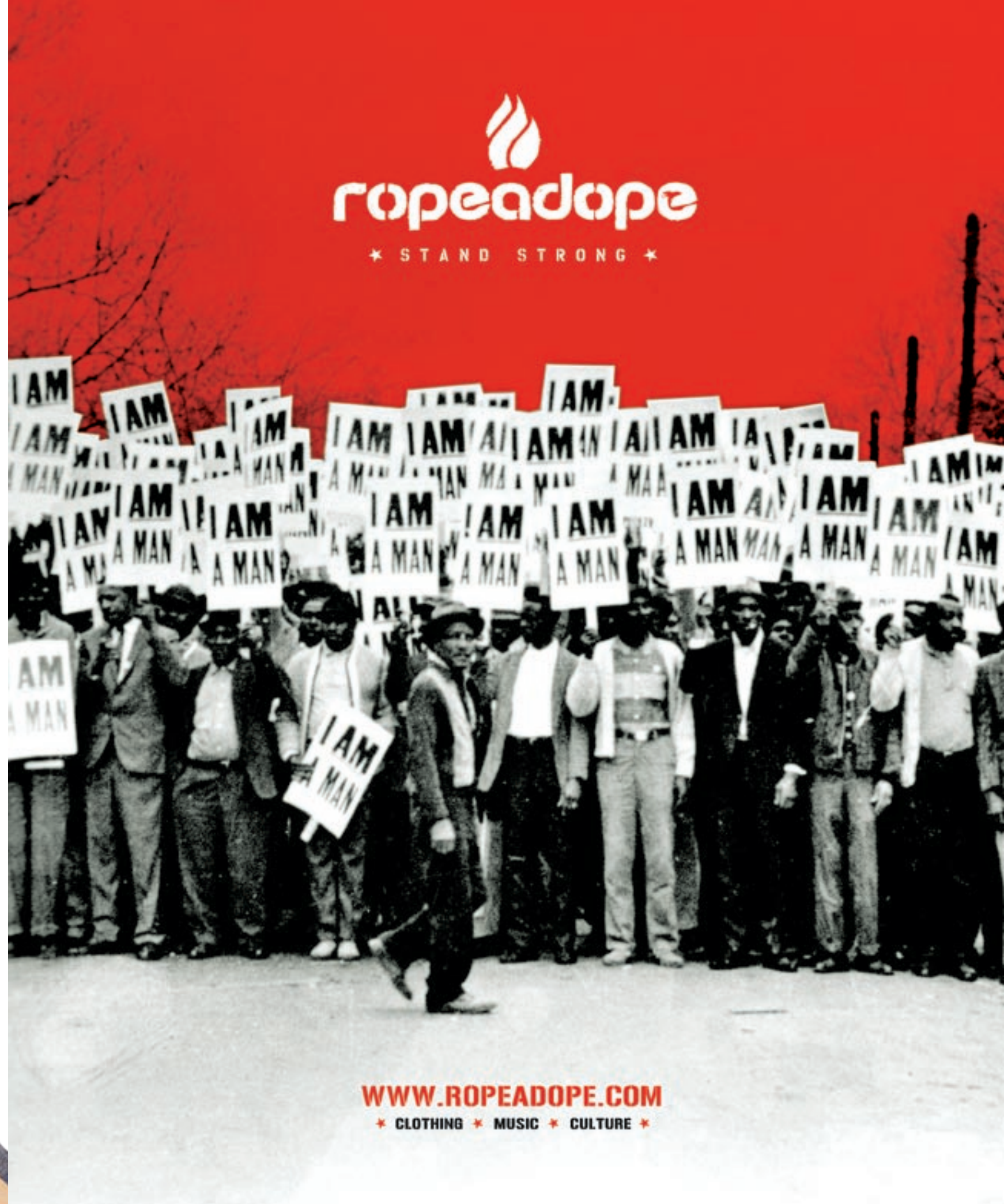
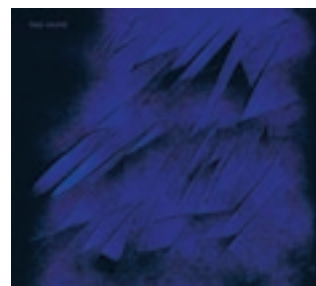
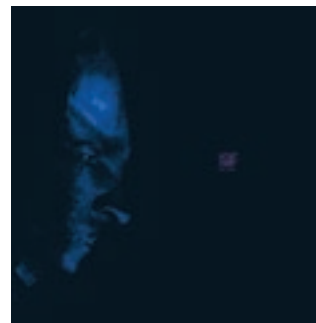
This *Deep Cuts* track started life as a lazy, steel-drum-belted roller; Get Physical's M.A.N.D.Y. injects it with a healthy dose of electro, amps up the stabs and arpeggios, and piles on starry-eyed synth lines that sound like a player piano run amok.

SILENT SHOUT (TROY PIERCE BARADO EN LOCOMBIA MIX) (V2 RECORDS)

Berlin-based minimalist Troy Pierce comes up with his strongest remix to date, swaddling the track in a mesh of brittle, crystalline beats while keeping all the acidic urgency of the original. Arpeggios fire without regard for collateral damage and in the new context, Karin's vocal processing draws a direct line back to Plastikman.

WE SHARE OUR MOTHERS' HEALTH (TRENTEMØLLER REMIX) (RABID)

Trentemøller does the impossible by turning *Silent Shout*'s most plodding, unruly cut—blasted with bent stabs, its vox detuned to drag-king extremes—into a lithe, focused groove that's part Border Community, part children's TV show, and 100% mental.




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WWW.ROPEADOPE.COM
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Labels we love

The 25 best independent labels.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST AND KEN TAYLOR

TYPE: DARREN BOOTH

Everyone seems to be mourning the death of the label. Corporate monoliths—and even more monolithic blanket orgs like the RIAA—would rather spend their time suing the crap out of tech-savvy teens than allow the imprints they've swallowed up to actually develop artists. We still believe that the best music—and the curation, design, packaging, and sense of community that comes with it—is independent, created by teams of devoted, creative individuals with super-honed zeitgeist feelers and a profound respect for the art *and* the craft. These label owners faithfully plumb the depths of suburban bedrooms, shitty rock clubs, unknown MP3 blogs, and overflowing demo bins, putting their hearts, souls, and meager paychecks into bringing us what—10 years down the line—will come to define us. They just *get* it, and that's why we love them.



DFA's James Murphy and Tim Goldsworthy
(photo by Ruvan)



Clone's Serge Verschuur



Alien8's Sean O'Hara (left) and Gary Worsley
(photo by Guylaine Bédard)



Cock Rock Disco's Jason Forrest



DC Recordings' J. Saul Kane

ABB

Homebase: Oakland, California

Sound: Individualistic indie hip-hop with personality, and silky nu-jazz and neo soul on the ABB Soul offshoot

Artists: Little Brother, Likwit Junkies, Peven Everett, Lizz Fields

Funny story: There's an artist who's taken five years to deliver a record...and they are being paid in exactly the same amount of time.

Obsessions: Growing the export side of our distribution company (RPM), disco classics, seeing West Coast hip-hop come back in a major way, Solar Radio (Dez Parkes and Barry King).

Tell us something we don't know: We listen to roughly 97.53% of all the music we receive in the mail or via internet.

Upcoming: New albums from Defari, Planet Asia, Soul:ID, Evidence, and The Twilite Tone

www.abbrecords.com, www.abb soul.com

ALIENS

Homebase: Montreal, Canada

Sound: An unpredictable stew of arty and experimental rock, electronic, and noise

Artists: Les Georges Leningrad, Merzbow, The Unicorns, Tim Hecker

Office vices: The internet, Soundscan reports, espresso, MySpace.com

Funny story: When The Unicorns were just starting out they bought this old school RV to tour across Canada and basically live in at the same time. Within a very short period there were countless problems with the vehicle, including a long tear along one side just below the roof that went on for 10 feet. It looked as if someone tried to break in with a giant can opener. I guess you had to see it.

Obsessions: Home brewing, Ruby on Rails, black metal, and '80s goth/new wave

Upcoming: The label turns 10 in September, and will offer direct digital sales from their website soon; they just dropped albums from Think About Life, Acid Mothers Temple, and Francisco Lopez.

www.aliensrecords.com

CLONE

Homebase: Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Sound: Crisp and clean electro and techno heavily influenced by '70s Italo-disco and '80s breakdance hits. Sublabel DUB releases less-danceable IDM bits.

Artists: Dexter, Alden Tyrell, Duplex, Legowelt

Office vices: We eat too many snacks.

Funny story: We are not very funny, unless you enjoy stories about anxiety attacks, fear of flying, nervous breakdowns, and a general lack of enthusiasm about today's music. These stories are the reason we started a sublabel called Frustrated Funk.

Tell us something we don't know: This month, we are starting a re-issue label (Clone Classic Cuts) to get old, deleted, and rare classic releases back in print!

Upcoming: New 12"s from Unit 4, The Isolators, Photocall, and Putsch 79 (with remixes by Prins Thomas and Daniel Wang), and a limited Clone X release from electronic funk act Applegarden

www.clone.nl

COCK ROCK DISCO

Homebase: Berlin, Germany

Sound: Where fucked-up breakcore, chip tunes, and rave anthems meet indie rock and pop

Artists: Jason Forrest, Stunt Rock, Vorpall, Doormouse

Office vices: We probably drink too much, but other than that, we're surprisingly all nice.

Funny story: On Duran Duran Duran's album *Very Pleasure*, the cock-sucking sound on "Interlude" was recorded live on stage after a maniacal fan offered her, um, services.

Obsessions: Japanese rave/trance/gabba, the Crazy Frog, and Satan

Upcoming: Audiogarde's *Popular Emotions* (Norwegian Italo-disco indie pop), Drumcorps' *Grist* (brutal grind-core fusion), plus stadium-filling booty breakcore from Duran Duran Duran and *White Cock 1-4*, a compilation of our first white labels

www.cockrockdisco.com

DC RECORDINGS

Homebase: Portobello Road, London, England

Sound: A cosmic kaleidoscope inspired by Krautrock, punk-funk, Italo, and outer space dub

Artists: Depth Charge, Emperor Machine, White Light Circus

Office vices: An unhealthy obsession with rodents...

Funny story: One of our inebriated artists (who shall remain nameless) was arrested in Russia for urinating in the street, resulting in a fistfight between the promoter and the local militia. Nice.

Obsessions: Rodent paraphernalia, strange Japanese kids' TV shows, Shaw Brothers films

Upcoming: A DC compilation album in September, plus albums from Emperor Machine, Padded Cell, and Orichalc Phase, and loads of 12"s

www.dcrecordings.com

DFA

Homebase: New York, New York

Sound: Pop music made by man and machine

Artists: LCD Soundsystem, Black Dice, Delia & Gavin, Hot Chip

Office vices: High-end coffeemakers, studio gear, playing each other new music

Funny story: When Black Dice handed in the artwork for *Broken Ear Record*, they were sure I was going to have a heart attack, because of the somewhat explicit nature of it (a woman's ass) and [the fact that] we had just completed the deal with EMI for worldwide distribution. We had 24 hours to turn it in and when they gave it to me, they said "We knew you might be a little nervous or upset so we have a plan B just in case," then proceeded to hand me artwork which was a photo of an enormous bag [of] marijuana with Black Dice written on the bag. I chose option A.

Obsessions: James [Murphy] loves furniture and Tim [Goldsworthy] loves vintage video equipment and strange models of Polaroid cameras.

Upcoming: Two new bands (Brighton, England's Prinzhorn Dance School and New Zealand's Shocking Pinks), two new LCD Soundsystem singles, and a new label called Death From Abroad

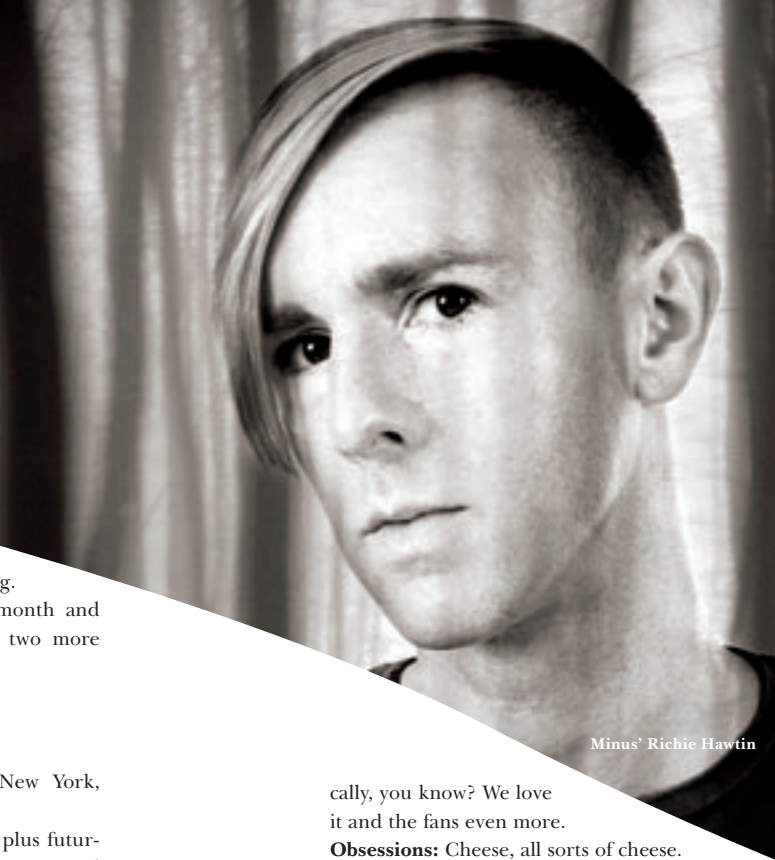
www.dfarecordings.com



Kompakt's Wolfgang Voigt



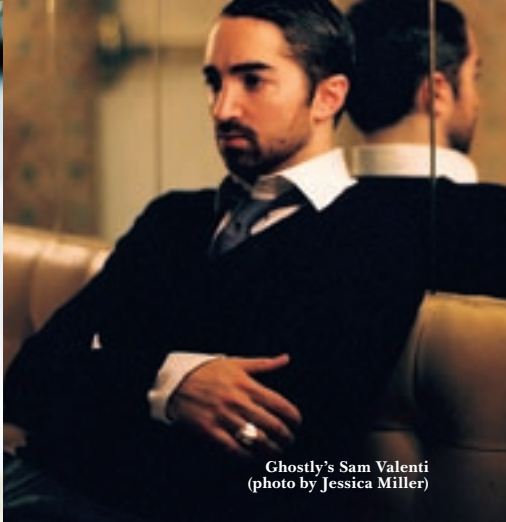
Kompakt's Reinhard Voigt



Minus' Richie Hawtin



Feedility's Hans-Peter Lindström



Ghostly's Sam Valenti (photo by Jessica Miller)



Kitty-Yo's Raik Hoelzel

DOMINO

Homebases: London, England; Berlin, Germany; Brooklyn, New York

Sound: An indie label taking chances, but maintaining exacting quality control; everything from singer-song-writer stuff to danceable rock to modern-jazz freakouts.

Artists: Franz Ferdinand, Juana Molina, Four Tet, Arctic Monkeys

Funny story: Caribou and Junior Boys (along with The Russian Futurists) were on a mammoth tour last year, six weeks with nary a day off, which was beset with pitfall after pitfall: heatstroke-induced vomiting, jellyfish stings, trips to the E.R., speeding tickets, abandoned vans, over-vigilant customs agents, and vehicular close encounters with quicksand and fuel pumps.

Obsessions: The Band's early catalog, instant messaging, iPod roulette on the office stereo, the prog rock co-worker Rebecca is able to unearth, HBO Sunday nights
Tell us something we don't know: The first employee of Domino Records in the US was a guy named Daniel Kessler, who had to leave when his "hobby" started to take off. That hobby was playing guitar in a band called Interpol.

Upcoming: New stuff from Adem, Clinic, Benjy Ferree, a new two-CD Four Tet remix anthology, and there's rumor of a new Max Tundra record in the offing

www.dominorecordco.us

FABRIC

Homebase: Above a fish restaurant in Farringdon (London, England)

Sound: Cutting-edge mixed CDs from the best and brightest in electronic music and hip-hop

Artists: Anyone big who has rocked the Fabric nightclub, including DJ Hype, Stacey Pullen, Scratch Perverts, and Evil Nine

Office vices: Noxious gas, Cointreau and Red Bull flammers, strong cheese, looking at breasts, nicotine-fuelled chocolate-covered sex.

Funny story: J Majik was held up at U.S. customs because they refused to believe he was a musician. The guys asked what style of music he makes. When he replied "drum & bass" they looked through his luggage and one accusingly said, "Okay, son, where's your drum and where's your bass?"

Obsessions: Nightclub-hating comedian Daniel Kitson, *Family Guy*, kung-fu movies, football (watching and playing), The White Bear public house on St. John Street, *The Sopranos*, flyers, peanut Kit-Kats, CocoRosie, bad boys, jotting down random quotes, eBay, making lists

Upcoming: Mixed CDs from Cut Copy, Tiefschwarz, Ricardo Villalobos, Rub 'n Tug, Krafty Kuts, and Stanton Warriors

www.fabriclondon.com

FEEDILITY

Homebase: Oslo, Norway

Sound: Shimmering contemporary disco

Artists: Hans-Peter Lindström, sometimes in collaboration with Prins Thomas

Funny story: I'm the only artist on my label.

Obsessions: Homegrown parsley, freshly made strawberry jam, playing Autoharp, managing iPod playlists

Tell us something we don't know:

There's no secrets. I'm not hiding anything.

Upcoming: A new Lindstrom 12" this month and a Feedility compilation in October, plus two more albums to come in 2007

www.feedility.com

GHOSTLY INTERNATIONAL

Homebase: Ann Arbor, Michigan and New York, New York

Sound: Avant-pop, ambient experiments, plus futuristic takes on shoegaze and hip-hop; offshoot Spectral purveys banging acid techno and minimal house

Artists: Dabrye, Matthew Dear, Mobius Band, Dykehouse

Office vices: Caffeine, absurdist humor, instant messaging instead of actually talking

Obsessions: Gang aesthetics, classic Powell-Peralta, exclusive material, embracing vinyl (the old) and digital (the new) equally

Tell us something we don't know: We are all blood brothers, but not by birth. By plastic forks.

Upcoming: A new LP from Bodycode on Spectral, Matthew Dear's sophomore LP, the return of Skeletons (and the Kings Of All Cities), and a Lusine compendium

www.ghostly.com, www.spectralsound.com

KITTY-YO

Homebase: The Prenzlauer Berg area of Berlin, Germany

Sound: Total Berlin style! Electro and techno with an art-school aesthetic, with forays into lounge and indie rock

Artists: Codec & Flexor, Chikinki, Jimi Tenor, Jay Haze

Office vices: No vices, just virtues: wisdom, equity, bravery, (ahem) temperance.

Funny story: There is one musician on our current roster who likes to promote his releases really physi-

cally, you know? We love it and the fans even more.

Obsessions: Cheese, all sorts of cheese.

Upcoming: Breathtaking singer-songwriter tunes from Raz Ohara, remixes and a new track from Jahcoozi, a new EP from Richard Davis, and exciting stuff from The Tape

www.kitty-yo.com

KOMPAKT

Homebase: Cologne, Germany

Sound: The ringleaders of *schaffel* house, maximal ambient, sensitive techno, and new-school trance

Artists: Superpitcher, DJ Koze, Klimek, Jonas Bering

Office vices: Chocolate cookies and chocolate bars. I guess we all have a sweet tooth...

Funny story: Our artists make us cry rather than laugh. They always keep their funny stories for themselves.

Obsessions: Chocolate cookies, our new offshoot K2, and writing newsletters for our MP3 shop

Upcoming: The *Total 7* compilation, full-lengths from Rex the Dog and Justus Köhncke, *Immer 2* mixed by Michael Mayer, and endless 12"s

www.kompakt-net.de, www.kompakt-mp3.net

MINUS

Homebase: Windsor, Canada and Berlin, Germany

Sound: Bang, bang, thump, click. Pioneering minimal techno and tweeky club bangers

Artists: Richie Hawtin, Magda, Troy Pierce, Marc Houle

Office vices: Coffee and cigarettes (Canada); coffee and afterhours (Berlin)

Obsessions: Tour buses in North America, Sunday Adventure Club in Berlin, and the next new Minus release in the cooker

Tell us something we don't know: We shovel our own snow, write our own press releases, and try to prove that control freaks can still dance!

Upcoming: New singles from JPLS and Tractile on Minus, and stuff from Alexi Delano on Plus 8

www.m-nus.com

MODULAR

Homebase: Sydney, Australia, with offices in New York City and London, England

Sound: Carefree, whether mystic retro rock, glowing digital pop, or schizophrenic maggot-hop

Artists: Wolfmother, Cut Copy, The Presets, The Avalanches

Office vices: Morning beach swims, push-up competitions, procrastination, and prawns (Sydney); snowman competitions, a big spacious office, Jen's dance

classes (NYC); beer, bitching, and bacon (London)

Funny story: Tony Pepperoni from The Avalanches is a walking, talking funny story of stupidity and sorrow, so much so we've given him a spot on our website to tell his stories every month. They're not really fit for print.

Obsessions: Podcasts (Beats In Space, Bubbletease, Stones Throw, The Office, Bumrocks), old French house, old folk, Chromeo, fitness, the sandwich Nazi, beer o'clock, our forthcoming merchandise line, new French house, raving and glowsticks, tidying the office, and your granny's underwear.

Upcoming: Albums from The Soft Lightes, Bumblebee, and New Young Pony Club, new Cut Copy material, and maybe even something from The Avalanches

www.modularpeople.com



Domino's Laurence Bell (photo by Eva Mandel)



Fabric's Keith Reilly and Steve Blonde (photo by Tom Oldham)



ABB's Bent B



Kompakt's Michael Mayer



Raw Fusion's Mats Karlsson



Modular's staff and label acts



Sublight's Aaron Rintoul



Tigerbeat6's Miguel Depedro and Maria Gonima



Sub Pop's Jonathon Poneman

NATURE SOUNDS

Homebase: Brooklyn, New York
Sound: Fresh hip-hop that owes a debt to the boom-bap of '90s New York, and classic dub
Artists: Vordul Mega, Mathematics, MF Doom, Earl "Chinna" Smith
Office vices: Chinese lunch specials and media mail
Obsessions: South American women
Tell us something we don't know: We are on the fast track to completely take this game over.
Upcoming: Lots of albums! Masta Killa *Made in Brooklyn*, Strong Arm Steady *Blast 4 Me*, GhostDOOM *Swift & Changeable*, Pete Rock *NY's Finest*
www.nature-sounds.net

PLUG RESEARCH

Homebase: Los Angeles, California
Sound: Electro-acoustic bedtime stories, thoughtful techno, and IDM adventures from a primarily L.A.-based cast
Artists: Dntel, John Tejada, Ammoncontact, Daedelus
Office vices: Good Belgian beer, Neil Diamond albums

Funny story: All of our funny stories involve felonies. Even the mildly funny ones are at least misdemeanors.
Tell us something we don't know: We've just started doing a monthly podcast, available on iTunes and our blog.
Upcoming: Albums from James Figurine, Samamidon, and Flying Lotus, plus Nobody's collected remixes and a Chessie compilation
www.plugresearch.com, plugresearch.blogspot.com

RAW FUSION

Homebase: Boogie down Stockholm, Sweden
Sound: Broken beat and nu-jazz, soulful house, and funk/soul heavily influenced by the black music diaspora
Artists: Beatfanatic, Povo, Speech Defect, Up Hygh
Office vices: Music first, cash money second!
Funny story: Aaron Phiri from our group Hearin' Aid was gone without a trace in his native Zambia for over a year at his parents' farm. We could not reach him because thieves had stolen their telephone wires.
Obsessions: World Cup 2006
Upcoming: New 12"s and remixes from Zumen, Simbad, Spiritual South, Aphro Pzyko, Quasimode, and Hearin' Aid
www.rawfusionrec.com

SOUND-INK

Homebase: Brooklyn, New York and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Sound: A Pandora's box for twisted dancefloors, mixing equal parts avant-rap, booty bass, and glitch with samples from the thrift-store dollar record bins and the NYC streets
Artists: Viktor Vaughn, Mutamassik, Plastic Little, Markus Wormstorn
Funny story: CX Kidtronik posted on Craigslist looking for girls to take shots of their butt cracks in low-slung jeans with "no photo budget." He got inundated with responses and it took us weeks to pick the best ones for the 12" and album cover. There's still hundreds of unused crack shots just waiting for another project to jump off...
Obsessions: 77Klash, DJ /rupture's forthcoming *Less Than 1,000* mix CD, artwork by our boy JK5 (tattooist extraordinaire, Saved NYC), *Ninja Gaiden Black*, Fulham Football Club, Vietnamese sammiches
Tell us something we don't know: Rival crews' beef slides off us like Teflon.
Upcoming: Team Shadetek's *Pale Fire* LP, High Priest's *Born Identity* LP
www.sound-ink.com

STONES THROW

Homebase: Highland Park in East Los Angeles, California
Sound: Instant hip-hop classics from indie rap's most popular MCs, new-era soul, and rare funk reissues on their Now-Again sublabel
Artists: MF Doom, Aloe Blacc, Peanut Butter Wolf, Breakestra

Office vices: Baris Manco and Turkish rock from the '60s and '70s (Egon); early to mid '80s L.A. electro-rap and early-to-mid-'90s Bay Area gangsta rap (Peanut Butter Wolf)
Funny story: Wildchild saw some boxes fall off a truck on the freeway a couple months back. He pulled over to see what they were. They turned out to contain over 3,000 copies of the DVD *Little Nemo* so he took them home.
Tell us something we don't know: Stones Throw sold more records in March of 2006 than we did in the entire year of 2002. We're growing.
Upcoming: Georgia Anne Muldrow's *Fragments of an Earth* LP, *Kashmere High School Stage Band: Texas Thundersoul 1968-1974*, an album of Madlib rapping over Dilla beats, and some new Madvillain shit where Doom raps about it being okay to give up weed
www.stonesthrow.com

SUB POP

Homebase: Seattle, Washington
Sound: Down-to-earth indie rock stalwarts branching out into nu-folk, pop gems, singer-songwriter business, and even electronic emo
Artists: Sleater-Kinney, The Shins, Postal Service, Iron & Wine
Office vices: Air hockey, Sparks, cookies from the Dahlia Bakery
Funny story: Kelley Stoltz pays to do a Katrina benefit where you donate \$100 to the Red Cross and Brian Wilson (of the Beach Boys) matches your money, gives you a phone call, and lets you ask him a question. Kelley remembers that, after getting his piano tuned, he could no longer play a song called "Meant for You," so he asks him what the chords are and Brian responds "I wouldn't know." The conversation grinds to a halt and Brian says, "Thanks for donating and good luck to you!" and hangs up. A few minutes later, the phone rings again. "Hi Kelley, it's Brian Wilson.

The first chord is an A minor." Kelley goes over to the piano, smacks an A minor, and starts playing the song and singing. Brian joins in and they sing a five-verse duet while on the phone!
Tell us something we don't know: We have a minimum of three dogs in the office at all times.
Upcoming: Albums from Comets on Fire, The Album Leaf, and Wolf Eyes, and a two-CD compilation from Dead Moon
www.subpop.com

SUBLIGHT

Homebase: Winnipeg, Canada
Sound: Dark (but often playful) breakcore and glitch from the scene's biggest antagonists
Artists: Fanny, Enduser, Datach'i, Bong-Ra
Office vices: Xbox 360, episodes of *Six Feet Under*
Funny story: Too much whiskey with Venetian Snares leads to debauchery often unimaginable to the average person: wearing peoples' houseplants home, discussing what your power animal is with solvent abusers in the bathroom of a less than desirable hotel bar.
Obsessions: Trying to find new hobbies (photography, mainly) now that this one has become a full-time job
Upcoming: A new Secret Mommy album (which came about from Andy Dixon recording his wisdom teeth being pulled out), Dino Felipe's *Dinosaur Bones & Pyramids* LP, and new stuff from Doormouse, The Flashbulb, and Richard Devine
www.sublightrecords.com

TIGERBEAT6

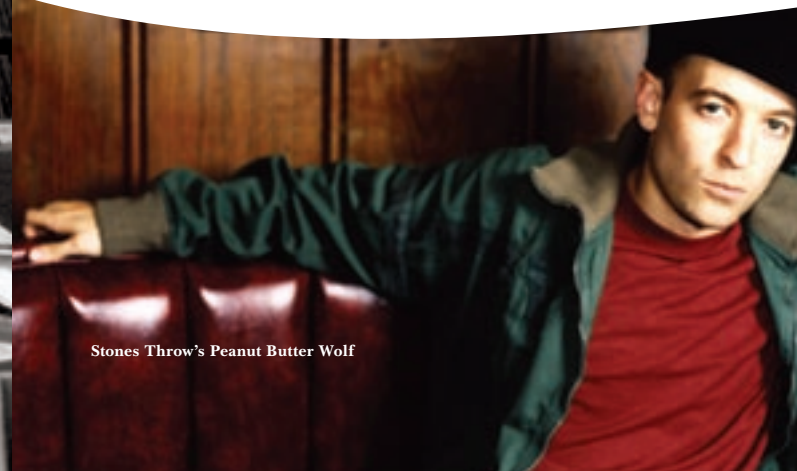
Homebase: Oakland, California
Sound: Iconoclastic electronic punk that flies by the seat of its pants, made by post-rave posterboys, psychedelic tripsters, and laptop jokers
Artists: Kid 606, Clipd Beaks, Quintron and Miss Pussycat, Genders
Office vices: Thai food, searching Craigslist for weird music gear, Bonkers maté tea, conspiracy theories, power naps, soundchecks, YouTube, www.cuteoverload.com
Funny story: Most of us try to sneak through borders by saying we're professional video gamers instead of musicians (to explain all the computers and wires and weird controllers)
Obsessions: Baltimore club, Noam Chomsky, recycling, Xiu Xiu, modernist prefab architecture, goat cheese, Cristian Vogel, Paperrad
Upcoming: The *Shockout Vol. 2* compilation and new full-lengths from Eats Tapes, Original Hamster, Knifehandchop, and GD Luxxe
www.tigerbeat6.com



Plug Research's Allen Avanesian, Cameron Porter, and Ryan Gamsby (photo by Irene Silva)



Nature Sounds' Devin Horwitz



Stones Throw's Peanut Butter Wolf



Sound-INK's Alex Threadgold

Labels
and
Love



Uncivilized World's
Arnaud Frisch



Ubiquity's Michael and Jody McFadden

UBIQUITY

Homebase: Costa Mesa, California

Sound: Downtempo, broken beat, nu-jazz, and house pairing the organic with the electronic, plus Afro-Cuban and Latin jazz on their Cubop sublabel and jazz/funk reissues on Luv N' Haight

Artists: Quantic, Sa-Ra, Nostalgic 77, Platinum Pied Pipers

Office vices: If the waves are good, surfing (no matter how busy) and on Friday evenings, we mix up diet Red Bull and Effen Vodka with sliced kumquats to start the weekend right.

Funny story: Yet again, Greyboy missed another gig and he's over a year late on his album.

Obsessions: *Law & Order* re-runs, Bay Hawk Pale Ale, architecture, warm weather, refining and improving Ubiquity

Upcoming: A fall t-shirt line, Owusu & Hannibal's *Living With Owusu & Hannibal*, and Radio Citizen's *Berlin Serengeti*

www.ubiquityrecords.com

UNCIVILIZED WORLD

Homebase: Paris, France

Sound: Worldly techno, hip-hop, and ethnic beats from artists who strive to be storytellers.

Artists: Jeff Mills, Birdy Nam Nam, Vitalic, Jennifer Cardini

Funny story: When we went to shoot Femi Kuti's *Live at the Shrine* DVD in Nigeria, the equipment was kept at the border by corrupt military officers. We ended up waiting for eight hours and arrived at The Shrine only one hour before the recording. After sitting in the middle of an audience of 3,000 angry people, the concert finally began. The atmosphere was so explosive it was one of the best shows we ever experienced.

Obsessions: Trying to release our records in as many countries as possible, organizing meetings between artists in different genres



Uncivilized World's
Olivia Arlabosse



VP Records
Chris Chin with
his father and
VP founder
Vincent Chin

Tell us something we

don't know: The two founders of the label met while organizing the first Techno Parade in Paris, gathering 200,000 people together at a time when government was fighting against raves. Every year, they still organize the Astropolis festival, the main techno event in France.

Upcoming: A live album from French turntablists Birdy Nam Nam (who will tour North America with Mouse on Mars in November), a French electro compilation (Gotan Project, M83, Vitalic)

www.uncivilizedworld.com

VP RECORDS

Homebase: Jamaica, Queens, New York

Sound: All things reggae, straight from the homeland: roots, dancehall, lover's rock, soca, calypso, and riddim compilations

Artists: Sean Paul, Elephant Man, I-Wayne, Luciano

Funny story: One of our dancehall divas held a bus of foreign journalists hostage when she mistakenly got on the wrong bus for a fashion event. When the PR rep refused to let her off, she caused a roadblock. Needless to say, there was no press coverage.

Obsessions: The dutty wine, digital riddims, and our Riddim Driven clothing line

Tell us something we don't know: Every Friday there is a soundclash between different employees of the promotions department.

Upcoming: Tanya Stephens' *Rebellion*, a new album from T.O.K., Morgan Heritage's *Live... Another Rockaz Moment*, and Nah No Mercy: *The Best of Bounty Killer*

www.vprecords.com, www.vpreggae.com,

www.riddimdrivenclimbing.com

RUNNERS UP

Antipodean Mark de Clive-Lowe's New Zealand upstart adds fuel to the bruk beat fire with new school funk jams. www.antipodeanrecords.net

Compost Black Label The black sheep of this nu-jazz family comes with innovative electro-tech gems from Minus 8, Lopazz, Trickski, and even Tyree Cooper.

www.compost-records.com

Ed Banger Pedro Winter team manages hot Parisian dancefloor jams, from Mr. Flash and his saucy future-hop to techno smacker Feadz. Plus, best promo sleeves in the biz, designed by So-Me. www.edbangerrecords.com

Innervisions Dixon splits from Sonar Kollektiv, taking this elegant house/techno incubator with him. Want a taste? Check Âme's stringy, soaring dancefloor anthem "Rej." www.innervisionvisions.com

Kemado Where flashy, spastic glam (Diamond Nights, The Fever), haunting orchestration (Tarantula A.D.), and shoegazing art-rock (Lansing-Dreiden) meet.

www.kemado.com

SMC The stable of Bay Area legends B-Legit and San Quinn, hyphy upstart Balance, and new Rick Rock find Eldorado Red. www.smcrecordings.com

Social Registry Psychedelia meets drone and dance in a wizard's cauldron in Brooklyn. Crucial bands include Gang Gang Dance, Blood on the Wall, and Psychic Ills. www.thesocialregistry.com

Tirk From live bands like New Young Pony Club to Maurice Fulton's Syclops project to Idjut Boys mix discs to Greg Wilson's edits, this is ground zero for freaked-out house and disco jams. www.tirk.co.uk

Trojan From skinhead reggae to rocksteady to Jamaican *mento*, your one-stop for niche reggae reissues. www.trojan-records.com

Wagon Repair Multi-layered, thoughtful techno abstractions from the Canadian label that Mathew Jonson, Konrad Black, and Mike Shannon call home. www.wagonrepair.ca



OH NO
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PRODUCED BY OH NO.
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oh no "exodus into unheard rhythms" check the shit out www.stonesthrow.com/ohno



Still Shining

Karriem Riggins and friends pitch in to help J Dilla complete a posthumous masterpiece.

WORDS: JESSE SERWER
PORTRAIT: DREW REYNOLDS
TYPE: DARREN BOOTH

From learning to operate a turntable while still in diapers in Detroit to recording his second LP in an L.A. hospital bed, James “Jay Dee” Yancey’s life was consumed by music. Unsurprisingly, this deep-rooted connection colored the esteemed producer’s death as well. Having lost his long-running battle with lupus just two days after his Stones Throw album, *Donuts*, hit shelves, it took only a day for Dilla’s grieving mother, Maureen Yancey, to reach out to BBE Records and urge them to release *The Shining*, the LP Dilla had struggled to complete before his sickness took a turn for the worse.

Ms. Yancey and Eddie Bezalel, US label manager for BBE and the A&R person on the project, entrusted the album’s completion to Karriem Riggins, a friend of Jay’s from Detroit who had relocated to the same L.A. neighborhood as Dilla; the pair had already collaborated on a series of live tracks that form *The Shining*’s nucleus.

“We’d try to capture certain vibes from a record he’d dig up, and make it his,” recalls Riggins, an accomplished jazz drummer who’s backed Betty Carter, Roy Hargrove, and Diana Krall and produced beats for The Roots, Common, and Erykah Badu. He was also Dilla’s main collaborator on 2001’s *Welcome 2 Detroit* (BBE). “*Welcome* came from live instruments and we wanted to start this one like that. Jay always knew exactly what he wanted, and everything fell into place. Later on, he couldn’t really walk anymore but even at that time, he was jumping on the





Riggins with Dilla and the Beat Junkies' DJ Rhetmatic after one of Dilla's live jazz shows (Photo courtesy of Rhetmatic)

“Jay always knew exactly what he wanted, and everything fell into place.”

—Karriem Riggins

keys, running around to stores and diggin' for records to get inspired by," notes Riggins.

At the same time, Dilla was making beats on his MPC at the house he shared with his mother and Common, and sporadically hooking up with fam like Busta Rhymes, Pharoahe Monch, and D'Angelo. On two tracks, "Baby" and "Won't Do," he even took well-executed stabs at singing. By the time he passed on February 10, Dilla had completed approximately 85% of what would prove to be his last fully realized full-length statement. (*Jay Love Japan*, another LP due out later this year on Operation Unknown Records, is a compilation of unreleased collaborations).

Far from attempting a 2Pac-style Pro Tools resurrection, Riggins and Bezalel recruited Guilty Simpson, a recent Stones Throw signee and good friend of Dilla's from Detroit, and The Roots' Black Thought to record *The Shining's* final verses. Dilla's favorite engineers, Bob Power and Dave Cooley, were brought in to mix the tracks down.

"Karriem was really in tune with Jay's concept from the beginning," recalls Cooley, who recorded some of the album's initial sessions and also mastered the album. "I get the feeling that Jay is still [watching over] this record, making sure everything's coming out cool."

While *The Shining* has a haunted quality (the title references the Steven King novel and film of the same name), it also brims with life and an overall message of love (four songs have "love" in the title). With 12 songs in 36 minutes, it's straight and to the point, like his classic one-minute gems with Slum Village.

"I couldn't think of a better word to describe the energy he gave off than 'love,'" says Guilty Simpson. "People who didn't really love rap music, who just liked it, aren't really inspired by J Dilla. But music lovers, as soon as you hear him, he influences your whole life."

The Shining is out August 22 on BBE. www.j-dilla.com, www.bbemusic.com

DILLA'S THRILLERS

Key collaborators break down *The Shining's* standout tracks.

"Geek Down" feat. Busta Rhymes

Karriem Riggins: We were going to get Busta to rhyme on it but that beat just speaks for itself. It's samples of kazoos and voices mixed together—I think Jay did some of the voices. All Busta had to do was bring that cadence. They worked so well together.

J. Rocc: The last conversation we had was about this song. Every time I'd go over there, I'd ask him about it, from the time he played me the sample to the time Busta laid the vocals down. Dilla was probably thinking, "This fool needs to geek down."

"Baby" feat. Madlib and Guilty Simpson

Guilty Simpson: I was in Cali with Dilla towards the tail end of the Pistons/Spurs series last summer, and we was hittin' the lab, smokin' good, and watching the games. It was very enlightening—we were able to talk about his music, his vision for my music, and the future. Being in the lab with him that last time was business as usual. He was always a mad scientist because he could see past vocals straight to the finished product—a true producer. He was more tired than usual but he always managed to smile and joke.

"Jungle Love" feat. MED and Guilty Simpson

KR: Jay would scat out rhythms to me and say 'Flip this on the drums.' The bass drum pattern is the whole song—there's nothing melodic but keys that come in and out. There's no snare or bass drum, either: I flipped over a 16-inch floor tom and used it as a kick, and he EQ'ed it up like a concert bass drum. The snare sound is me hitting the hi-hat with two sticks, and Jay Dee on the tambourines. Jay was supposed to rhyme on it, but he never got the chance. I got Guilty to lay a verse where Jay's was supposed to be because that was one of his favorite rappers.

GS: It was very important for me to write with the mind-state that Jay was still here, rather than letting my heavy heart compromise the chemistry of the song. I wrote that rhyme in 15 minutes. It was like the beat helped co-write that shit, that's how easy Dilla tracks make spittin'. Pure genius!

"Over The Breaks"

KR: We did about five tracks like this where Jay would throw a breakbeat on and we'd just play keys over it; this was just the one I chose for the album. I forget where the drums are from. We used the Al Green break from Eric B and Rakim's "Mahogany" on one, but we didn't want to have sample issues.

"Body Movin'" feat. J. Rocc

KR: This reminds me of a 2006 *Wild Style* theme. We did it live in the studio with J. Rocc on the cut and just added a few keyboard touches. He told me to take a solo on the Korg.

J. Rocc: The studio didn't even have a 1200, just some old school turntable and I laid down some cuts over the drums. It was crazy hearing the way he freaked it after it was mixed down.

Dave Cooley: He had that full understanding of the talents of the people he worked with. He'd choose people, then sit back and let the project have a mind of its own. Also, he'd never do things twice. He knew in his head how he wanted it sound in advance and would really never "try" anything in the studio. He would only "do"...hardly a drop of wasted energy.

"Love Movin'" feat. Black Thought

KR: You know how disco records speed up, and the drums turn into something else? We were listening to this disco joint where the drums sound like some crazy shakers and we decided to do our own version of that. That's Jay on the guitar and electric bass—that cat was an all-around musician.





Jeff Mills performing a live one-off concert with the Montpellier National Orchestra at Pont du Gard in France, July 2005

For Whom the Bells Toll

Jeff Mills speaks about making his classics classical.

WORDS: MATTHEW SCHNIPPER PHOTOS: STEPHANE BARBIER

TYPE: DARREN BOOTH

Rumor has it that when Jeff Mills plays “The Bells,” crowds recognize the track within .37 seconds. If that’s true, then playing the chiming anthem is probably quicker and more effective than waving.

“It’s something I can use to say hello to the people,” concurs the techno founder about his signature track. Made in 1994, it was not until spring of 1996 that “The Bells” saw official release on Mills’ Purpose Maker imprint. (Before that, Mills played it from a custom 13” record.) He claims he’s played the record every time he’s DJed since he created it, and that it has never not worked.

Watching Mills play “The Bells” at Sonar—a performance documented on the DVD that Axis Records released to mark the track’s 10-year anniversary—his claim is easy to believe. He’s inside a monstrous dark room with big blue lights flashing. Enormous video screens behind Mills flash his name. The camera zooms to him, fingers quick and clean on the mixer, like dealing cards. We hear the recognizable plink and immediately everyone is yelling with hands in the air. The cheering is immeasurable, like Mills has just won the Super Bowl of techno. Essentially, playing “The Bells” turns any club into a 14-year-old’s first rave in the woods.

Communal delight conquered, Mills returned to France in July 2005 to give “The Bells” a bit of an adult update, performing it (alongside numbers like “Amazon” and “Sonic Destroyer”) live with the Montpellier Philharmonic Orchestra. A new DVD, *Blue Potential*, documents the collaboration.

During the performance, Mills wears a pastel polo shirt and green pants; he looks not unlike a J. Crew model. In the interviews that accompany *Blue Potential*, he comes off as outstandingly genial and happily modest—not dismissing his talent or worth, but certainly not drawing attention to it. There is an ineffable humility that comes from Mills,

fabric are back

“ [Techno] is a tool to provoke a spiritual type of feeling. ”



a total glee and thankfulness coupled with a slight bafflement that others—a whole team, even—might want to work on his work. Over the phone from his home in Berlin—punctuating his speech with frequent “umms” and “hms”—he displays the same thoughtfulness he must have employed when mapping his songs into full orchestral compositions.

In that transcription process, Mills had minimal interaction with the orchestra members, a problem that is due to something larger than just a language barrier. “You generally work alone in this industry,” he says. “Maybe it’s just me, but I hear very little discussion about music, actually.” He seems a bit sad, but mostly accepting of the solitary electronic-dance-music lifestyle.

It’s a bizarre coda to his tender comments on the genre, one he has obviously had a strong hand in molding. When he and Robert Hood first starting making minimal techno, they consciously tried to make it “a tool to provoke a spiritual type of feeling,” and he’s unsure if it’s accomplishing that now. Laughing, he finally leaves the subject of solitude, calling the making of techno simply “a one-man spaceship.”

Blue Potential was initially inspired by Mills’ rewriting of the soundtrack to Fritz Lang’s 1927 film *Metropolis* in 2000, and many of the orches-

tral reworkings have a similar feel to them. The most striking moment, though, is to hear and watch the transformation of “The Bells,” which becomes stouter when performed by 80 classical musicians. The video of the performance features a bald and focused French man hitting golden chimes, furrowed brow steady on the sheet music. Mills—in a suit jacket, with headphones on firmly—reaches between gear with arms outstretched, moving nimbly from knob to button, thoroughly in control. The string section rubs its bows sharply, and suddenly the most frequently caned techno song ever becomes a scary soundtrack to an imaginary movie. Performed at night, outside, and with the beautiful Pont du Gard illuminated in the background, the music Mills made with mid-’90s technology is warmly recreated for the ages. The crowd stands and jumps and hoots. Just like when he DJs, Mills is steady and thoroughly powerful. He knows how much a moment with the song means to its audience and he’s careful with what he’s doling out. But over the phone, Mills finally allows himself a bit of humble joy. “Even in a situation where 80 musicians are playing this track, people still recognize it,” he says with a professorial giggle. “It’s a great feeling.”

The *Blue Potential* CD/DVD is out now on *Uncivilized World*. www.uncivilizedworld.com, www.axisrecords.com

GENERAL MILLS

More words from the techno master.

ON THE MEANING OF THE TITLE *BLUE POTENTIAL*

“It’s in reference to the possibility of finding information [about] who we are or where we come from or where we’re going, and looking to the things that are around us...to find answers.”

ON MELDING CLASSICAL AND TECHNO

“Whatever sound, whatever voice I can find to imitate what I am thinking—be it classical or electronic or acoustic—is applicable. I’m conscious of what sounds electronic, but not which percentage.”

ON PLAYING IN NEW YORK CITY

“I grew up with this fantasy of what New York was like on Saturday night back in the ’70s and early ’80s. We would hear the stories about what was going on in this city. Then you have the chance to go there and play! It’s a gift.”

ON THE FUTURE OF TECHNO

“I had dinner with Richie [Hawtin] recently. We were comparing notes to see if we hear the same thing. I think we all agree that if electronic music survives the next few years it definitely has a life in the future.”

ON PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

“I plan to play much more in America. I’ve never toured America. I’ve never been to certain parts of the country. I’m interested in going to see how people are.”



The Herbaliser

FABRICLIVE.26
Out Now

Jake and Ollie are established as one of UK hip hop’s most innovative and reliable production teams. Featuring their own productions along-side tracks from Rjd2, DJ Format, James Brown, Eric B & Rakim, The Roots, Diplo and Bugz in the Attic, this mix shows the duo’s love of beats, soul and funk.



DJ Format

FABRICLIVE.27
Out Now

FABRICLIVE.27 comes from arch party starter DJ Format. It’s a blend of hot, heavy hip hop and funk from the likes of Cut Chemist and Coldcut, through to the soulful vocals of Ella Fitzgerald and Cleo Lane, Jimmy Smith and Ananda Shankar – this is a mix you can’t stop nodding your head at.



Evil Nine

FABRICLIVE.28
Released 07.11.06

Marine parade’s duo evil nine rock out on FABRICLIVE.28 a stylish, blistering blend of breaks, electro, indie rock and hip hop. Matching genres and beats, it features electroclash innovators Riton and Digitalism, breaks’ kingpin Adam Freeland and even rock legends the clash. Forget everything you know about breakbeat.



Matthew Dear as Audion

fabric 27
Out Now

On ‘fabric 27’, Ghostly International’s Matthew Dear dispenses with the pleasantries and hammers the sound system under his Audion alias. Dark grooves pour from the speakers in a state of the art techno mix.



Wiggle

fabric 28
Out Now

Fabric residents Terry Francis and Nathan Coles, the founders of the infamous Wiggle parties, stylishly fuse a wide range of house grooves from the likes of Corrie, Argy and Army of one alongside some of their own productions and remixes.



Tiefschwarz

fabric 29
Available 08.08.06

‘fabric 29’ is the sound of a city—a deep, driving house mix sent straight from the heart of Berlin’s agenda-setting clubscene. Features tracks from Claude VonStroke, Riton, M.A.N.D.Y. and Tiefschwarz themselves.

Forthcoming artists in the series: Cut Copy, Rub N Tug, Krafty Kuts, Ricardo Villalobos, Stanton Warriors.

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www.fabriclondon.com





THE WANDERER

Berlin's micro-pop mistress Barbara Morgenstern steps out of the living room and into the world.

WORDS: TONY WARE PHOTOS: MICHAEL FELSCH TYPE: DARREN BOOTH

The living room has always been an integral facet of Barbara Morgenstern's aesthetic, both literally and figuratively. The Berlin-based electronic singer-songwriter-producer—known for her hushed and huddled organ tones and crisply sequenced wisps—emerged as part of the mid-'90s DIY *Wohnzimmer* ("living room") movement, where artists hosted informal concerts throughout the diffused squats of the former East Berlin. Fueled by this communal experience—a bonding moment for Germany's culturally disconnected post-WWII generation—Morgenstern produced plaintive, digitally dappled pop with room to emit and emote.

"I came from a small town in the Rhein-Ruhr [industrial belt] to Berlin, which was then also full of rotten buildings," says Morgenstern by phone from the increasingly gentrified German capitol. "Here we had illegal clubs and cafés where people would meet [and] struggle together for identity."

In reunited Germany's hedonistic state—a byproduct of decaying authority in the wake of reunifica-

tion—Morgenstern also found a romantic industrialism that fueled her collaborative spirit, resulting in albums and installations with Stefan Betke (Pole), Thomas Fehlmann (The Orb/Readymade), and Stefan Schneider and Robert Lippok (both To Rococo Rot), among others. Morgenstern's frictionless approach to glitch-pop—soft-focus productions designed for the hearth rather than cavernous concert halls—was best summed up by her 2003 album *Nichts Muss* (Monika), whose title roughly translates to "nothing forced."

Morgenstern's fourth full-length, *The Grass Is Always Greener*, finds her returning to her living room piano, having experienced far vaster living and breathing room following a year-long Goethe Institut-sponsored world tour alongside Maximillian Hecker.

"I saw Germany in a different light and that our life is so high-standard compared to India, Indonesia," says Morgenstern. "Making music is really a luxury; there they just care about living. I really came to value certain rights we have at home. Situations could change



I had gone so many places, and I wanted my songs to do so also.



HOT SPOTS
Barbara Morgenstern picks the most interesting stops on her world tour.

MUMBAI: The people, the food, the colors, the smell, and the nature were completely exciting. A one-hour walk on the street was filled with thousands of impressions, after which we were completely exhausted. I've never experienced a society more different to ours. Although it's so poor, the atmosphere is friendly and peaceful.

PEKING: We had the chance to go to the Great Wall and the Forbidden City. It was

very cold and fresh and the old Chinese architecture's wideness and its space really impressed me. While playing, the people stand really close to the stage. Body contact in everyday life is really usual, which I'm not used to—it sometimes made me aggressive. You feel the economic progress and the growth everywhere.

TEL AVIV: I've never been to Israel before and as a German, you are full of fear [of] how people will treat you. I

experienced that it was not a problem to be German; people [want to interact with you] to work on the history. The city is amazing; it's very [similar] to Berlin but empty because of bomb threats. It was interesting to listen to people of my age talking about the conflict between Israel and Palestine and I really enjoyed the beach, the concert, and the atmosphere.

TOKYO: We came to Tokyo with horrible jetlag and immediately went to dinner in

Shibuya. This was a complete culture shock—the big crossings with hundreds of people, hundreds of people in the metro. The sounds and the lights were so massive that I felt like I was on another planet. The clash of old culture and pop culture is fascinating.

TASCHKENT: Taschkent is the capital of Uzbekistan, a country [caught] between the [Oriental way of life] and Communism—what a strange mixture. It is a big city that was completely destroyed by an earthquake in the '60s. The people were crazy about the music—shouting, dancing. I was dancing on the stage. It was massive!

so quickly, be both happy and sad, and this is in the album."

Cultural identity has long played a prominent role in Morgenstern's music. She and her peers of the '90s *electronische musik* wave—Mouse on Mars, Ellen Allien, Michael Mayer, Gudrun Gut—subtly imbue their music with a melancholy inherited (along with a conflicting sense of pride and guilt) as children of post-war Germany. Having once fielded the frustrations of an unsure industry, she observes that the new wave of German artists benefit from increased self-assurance, an attitude reflected in the country's new national campaign, "Du bist Deutschland" ("You Are Germany").

While her techno contemporaries' most Teutonic quality is often their sense of rhythm, Morgenstern delivers sincere, honeyed melodies in her native language. But she's also an emissary of a greater pop tradition, peppering her songs with English phrasing, as on *The Grass Is Always Greener's* atypically uptempo first single, "The Operator." "English sounds really nice in a song that is really poppy, like when I say 'Take me, take me' like [the band] a-ha," laughs Morgenstern.

As experienced by this writer in Germany early 2003, Morgenstern strikes a far cheekier pose live than on record, while always vibing off of the audience. And far from her days being satisfied playing friends' living rooms, Morgenstern has now traveled extensively, from jungle-overrun Buddhist temples to technology-oversaturated clubs. Along the way she came to realize that the grass is *not* always greener, and returned to Berlin with a heightened appreciation of "rotten" eddies, and secret hideaways and stomping grounds. She applies a newly ascetic, less cluttered aesthetic to *The Grass...*, which is less a series of tightly sequenced pirouettes than a selection of panoramic snapshots.

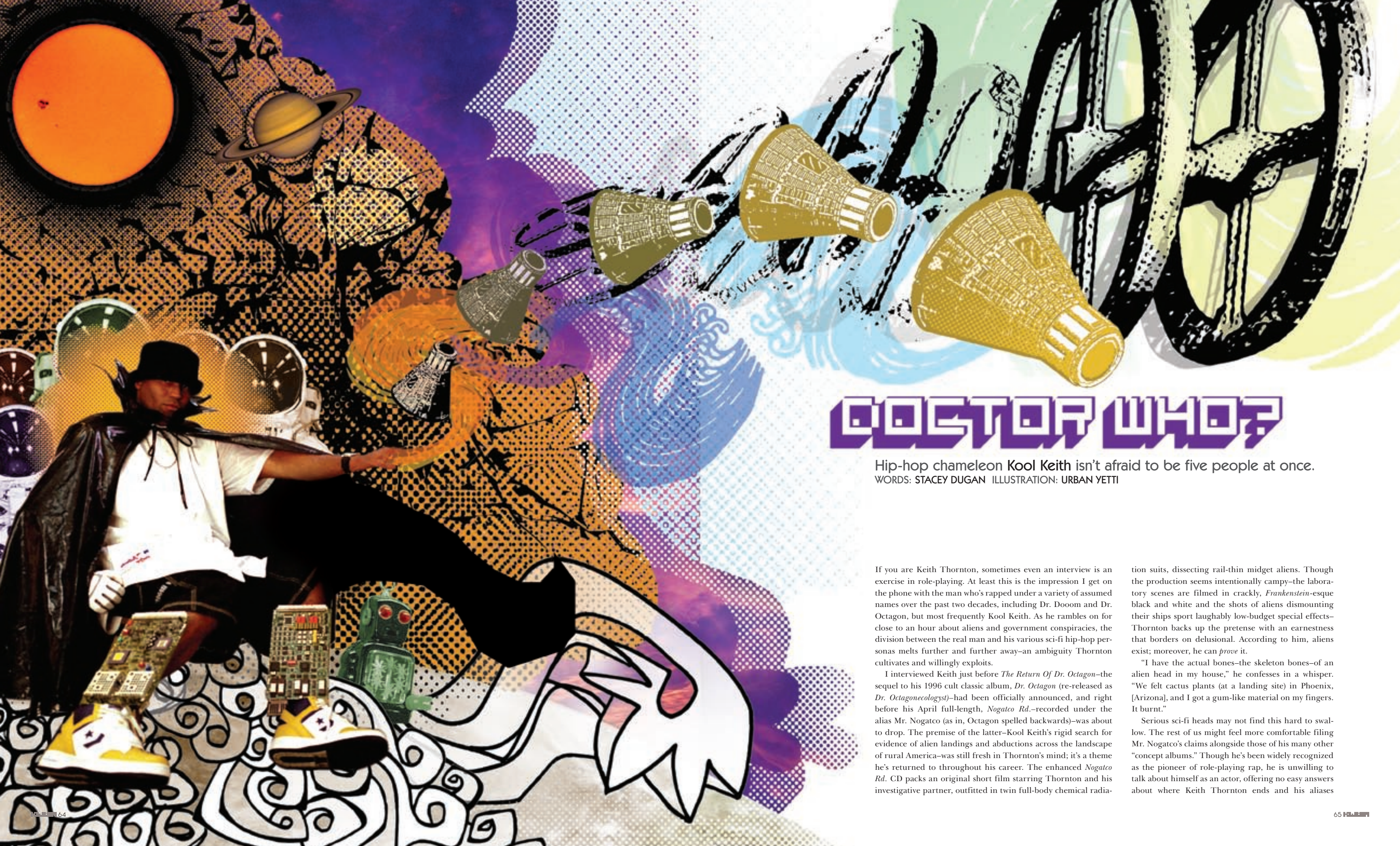
"Solo shows never had enough tension, and I was fed up of the organ and wanted to play the songs on a piano," says Morgenstern. "I've always wanted to play a song from beginning to end. I wanted the ability to improvise, and not think so much about what could and could not be done with programming beats. I had been thinking previously in small patterns and sometimes it kills dynamics, so I wanted to feel more just the song with a drummer."

Indeed, *The Grass Is Always Greener* sees less use of the organ (almost a crime, considering "organ" is almost central to Morgenstern), and introduces splashier percussion and crinkly detailing.

Some titles encapsulate particular settings, such as "Unser Mann Aus Hollywood" ("Our Man from Hollywood"), "Juist" (an island off northern Germany), "Die Japanische Schranke" ("The Japanese Gate"), and "Mailand" (Milan). Others personify a more universal ardor, including "Das Schöne Einheitsbild" (somewhere between "The Beautiful Image" and "Uniformity"), "Alles Was Lebt Bewegt Sich" ("Everything that Lives Moves"), and "Ein Paar Sekunden" ("A Few Seconds"). The overall mood—familiar to fans of Lali Puna, Joni Mitchell, New Order, and Björk—is one of hopeful longing for places of residence and resonance.

"I had gone so many places," says Morgenstern, "and I wanted my songs to do so also, but always return with me to where I feel most creative, most at home."

The Grass is Always Greener is out in Europe on Monika Enterprise and in the U.S. on Plug Research. www.barbaramorgenstern.de, www.monika-enterprise.de,



DOCTOR WHO?

Hip-hop chameleon Kool Keith isn't afraid to be five people at once.
WORDS: STACEY DUGAN ILLUSTRATION: URBAN YETTI

If you are Keith Thornton, sometimes even an interview is an exercise in role-playing. At least this is the impression I get on the phone with the man who's rapped under a variety of assumed names over the past two decades, including Dr. Doom and Dr. Octagon, but most frequently Kool Keith. As he rambles on for close to an hour about aliens and government conspiracies, the division between the real man and his various sci-fi hip-hop personas melts further and further away—an ambiguity Thornton cultivates and willingly exploits.

I interviewed Keith just before *The Return Of Dr. Octagon*—the sequel to his 1996 cult classic album, *Dr. Octagon* (re-released as *Dr. Octagonecologist*)—had been officially announced, and right before his April full-length, *Nogatco Rd.*—recorded under the alias Mr. Nogatco (as in, Octagon spelled backwards)—was about to drop. The premise of the latter—Kool Keith's rigid search for evidence of alien landings and abductions across the landscape of rural America—was still fresh in Thornton's mind; it's a theme he's returned to throughout his career. The enhanced *Nogatco Rd.* CD packs an original short film starring Thornton and his investigative partner, outfitted in twin full-body chemical radia-

tion suits, dissecting rail-thin midget aliens. Though the production seems intentionally campy—the laboratory scenes are filmed in crackly, *Frankenstein*-esque black and white and the shots of aliens dismantling their ships sport laughably low-budget special effects—Thornton backs up the pretense with an earnestness that borders on delusional. According to him, aliens exist; moreover, he can *prove* it.

"I have the actual bones—the skeleton bones—of an alien head in my house," he confesses in a whisper. "We felt cactus plants (at a landing site) in Phoenix, [Arizona], and I got a gum-like material on my fingers. It burnt."

Serious sci-fi heads may not find this hard to swallow. The rest of us might feel more comfortable filing Mr. Nogatco's claims alongside those of his many other "concept albums." Though he's been widely recognized as the pioneer of role-playing rap, he is unwilling to talk about himself as an actor, offering no easy answers about where Keith Thornton ends and his aliases



"I have the actual bones—the skeleton bones—of an alien head in my house."

begin. But the best performers truly buy into the characters they play, and Thornton's ability to do so—or perhaps, conversely, his inability to distinguish between his real self and the characters he plays—is what sets him apart as one of the greatest conceptual rapper of all time.

Such façades are not easily cultivated. Thornton began his career as a member of the Ultramagnetic MCs, a lyrically abstract Bronx-based group formed in 1984. The trio made no secret of Thornton's history as a psychiatric patient at New York City's Bellevue hospital, where he was treated for depression; in fact, they used the information freely to inflate his reputation as an unstable character.

Erotic Man, his first solo album as Kool Keith, was released in 1996 (the same year as *Dr. Octagon*). It found Thornton trumpeting yet another fringe genre—pornographic rap—though it was his 1997 follow-up, *Sex Styles*, that would become the much-lauded flagship of the niche. The highly explicit (some might say freaky) descriptions of sex and foreplay had little to do with Dr. Octagon's fantastical depictions of outer space and the future, but the projects did share one common thread: Thornton's extensive, if not tangential, exploration of a specified subject matter over the course of an album.

"Because I have a lot of [material], I do little things to warm up my mind," says Thornton, who has released more than 30 albums over the course of his career. "I take a (character) part and do research for a month or so to get into something. I have different sessions, like I might do curse styles: I'll just curse all night—make myself spit the most get-off-my-chest things."

On *The Return of Dr. Octagon*, Thornton throws himself once again into the role of the Octagonecologist, a physician with prophetic insights into mankind's future—and its sometimes surrealist futurist present. "Ants," for example, is a literal birds-eye perspective of a society that has sublimated human existence with the uniformity of daily routines. "Aliens" is a lyrically fragmented account of "what we're gonna do when the aliens get here" and the signs that might warn us of their approach. "*The highway that night/The orange beam comin' down was right/Truck stop/Not a myth/Remember that light*," he flows staccato over an uneasy, carnivalesque tempo augmented by a discordant piano.

The album is woven together more loosely than its predecessor, skimming across concerns as diverse as the world's dwindling resources ("Trees") and the possibility of an Illuminati-like omnipotent presence ("Perfect World"). Thornton's chameleon flow does something to aid those transitions, though—when he narrates a cartoonish car chase in an eerie, backroads growl over the country twang of "A Gorilla Driving A Pick-Up Truck" (a wildly different tone from his club holler on "Al Green"), *The Return* definitely feels like a chorus of voices from a doctor who, over the years, has gone a little schizophrenic.

More than ever, we're given the feeling that perhaps average folk aren't meant to understand exactly where Thornton is coming from—we should simply feel lucky to have been invited to his party. Like any true recluse, Thornton says the work he's most proud of has yet to be released and may, in fact, never make its way to the public. "I have certain songs I wrote that I won't put out yet because they are too beyond the average human mind," he says. "The average human mind couldn't relate to it at all."

The Return Of Dr. Octagon (OCD International) and *Nogateo Rd.* (Insomniac) are out now.

www.thereturnofdoctagon.com, www.insomniacmusic.com

Psalm One

THE DEATH OF FREQUENT FLYER

The new album from Southside Chicago native Psalm One. Featuring appearances by Brother Ali, Thaione Davis, KaDi and Ang13. Produced by Overflo, Ant, Maker, Thaione Davis, Madd Crates, and V-Traxx.

IN STORES 7.18.06

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"Things do indeed go better with Blueprint and Rjd2 in your ears, because they recognize hip hop's limitless potential..." -RapReviews.com (9 of 10)

"What's with Minnesotans and their scary good indie hip hop records?" -Spin (A-)

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P.O.S
AUDITION



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YOU CAN'T IMAGINE
HOW MUCH FUN WE'RE HAVING

"Atmosphere has never sounded as pointed and focused as it does here on it's fifth album." -Billboard

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PHOTOGRAPHY: ITO
STYLING: ANGEL CLOUTHIER

MODELS: ABBY, ALEXIS, ESTRELLA,
SOFIA, PARKER, LIZ, LOUISE, ROBBI,
ROSE, STEVE, THOM, ZAN



TOP: Robbi wears Triko hoodie, American Apparel tank top, PF Flyers pants and shoes, and Chatham hat. Estrella wears Beisey Johnson top, Tramando pants, ACME shoes, and vintage hat. **BOTTOM:** Liz wears Gats dress, Vans shoes, Conche headband, and H&M earrings. Abby wears vintage jumpsuit, band, and Priss earrings. Alexis wears t-shirt and jacket from Umbro by Kim Jones, Pepe jeans, Adidas shoes, Shane belt, Chatham hat, Nike wristband, and Carrera sunglasses.

OPENING SPREAD: Louise wears American Apparel t-shirt, L.A. Denim shorts, K-mart sandals, Cazal sunglasses, and H&M gold chains. Steve wears Claw t-shirt, Levi's jeans, Nike shoes, Babylon Yacht Club belt, New Era hat, vintage necklace and sunglasses. **RIGHT:** Rose wears Pegleg t-shirt, H.Fredriksson shorts, Leroy Girl boots, Plain Gray headband, and Priss earrings. Alexis wears t-shirt and jacket from Umbro by Kim Jones, Pepe jeans, Adidas shoes, Shane belt, Chatham hat, Nike wristband, and Carrera sunglasses.





Sofia wears Charlie dress, PF Flyers blouse, and Naturalizer shoes
Parker wears Gsus shirt, American Apparel t-shirt, Levi's jeans, and Converse Jack Purcell shoes

Thom wears Lincoln Mayne hoodie, Pegleg t-shirt, Ben Davis shorts, Reebok shoes, and his own hat
Zan wears Triko hoodie, Lincoln Mayne t-shirt, Trash & Vandevelle pants, Umbro by Kim Jones shoes, Chanel scarf, and vintage jewelry



FIG 3A.

WORLDLY DESIRES

DI CHEB | SABBABH
La Ghriba: La Kahena Remixed



KAD
Societe



CHASER
UNKNOWN PLEASURES
T-SHIRT



Products vary by store.

AZAM ALI
Elysium For The Brave



LENINE
Lenine



VIRGIN
LION CREST
SHOULDER BAG



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\$249.99



FIG 3A. GLOBAL GOODIES KIT

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ARIZONA MILLS • BOSTON • DALLAS GRAPEVINE MILLS • SALT LAKE CITY



Aloe Blacc

**Album
Reviews
8.06**



THE OKAYPLAYER GENERATION GETS ITS NEW JACK SWING WITH TWO STONES THROW GEMS



**ALOE BLACC
SHINE THROUGH**
Stones Throw/US/CD

**DUDLEY PERKINS
EXPRESSIONS (2012 A.U.)**
Stones Throw/US/CD

By some counts, we're well into the third generation of R&B raised in hip-hop's worldwide shadow. With new jack swing now oldies-radio fodder, the Okayplayer generation—Maxwell, Jill Scott, D'Angelo, as well as today's Platinum Pied Pipers and Sa-Ra—is tussling with how to reinvent the R&B wheel. Of course, in between future soul shots from those crews, we third-gens need some discs to spin. In comes Stones Throw with two wildly varied choices, linked by production work from Mr. Here, There, and Everywhere himself: Madlib. Option A is clear-eyed and clear-headed—in pitch and in groove, in English and *Español*—and uplifting at all times. Option B is bleary-eyed and slightly confused behind the start-stop beat; it's tuned somewhere other than Earth, recorded in Sir George (Clinton)'s English only, and lifted (in the Cheech & Chong sense).

The first offering, Aloe Blacc's *Shine Through*, represents the best results of R&B taken seriously and deeply, mixing with ease his gorgeous (if occasionally Tracy Chapman-esque) voice with mainly self-produced tracks that dip into electronics, riddims, salsa, and hip-hop thump. The former Emanon member is a quadruple threat: Manning the boards; writing and singing in English and Spanish with equal dexterity; rapping as the mood strikes him; and mixing in street-recorded blues ("Busking") whenever he feels.

Blacc's specialty, though, is the three-way intersection of Latin, R&B, and hip-hop flavors. "Bailar—Scene I" chats up the ladies with meandering guitar, horns, and a salsa shake while he croons, raps, and drops into Spanish, somehow avoiding any gimmicky vibe. He keeps genius prankster Madlib from driving "One Inna" off the rails with disjointed sampler soul, using his powerful voice to give the track an easygoing

momentum. When an artist showcases his flexibility—singing over microchip crunk ("Dance for Life") and masterminding a swinging, straight read of the salsa standard "Severa" on the same disc—we're forced to take him as seriously as his forebears. *Shine Through* gleams with the stately sheen of Isaac and Marvin, singers who stretched their voices—and studio musicians—in the name of experimentation, while always remaining pop-informed melody makers.

While Blacc explicitly shouts out his predecessors (especially on "Whole World"), Dudley Perkins uses numbers like "Funky Dudley" to enumerate his influences (P-Funk, Ohio Players, James Brown, Sly Stone) over tightly snapped rubber-band bass. Perkins might deny it, but his hazy, Ol' Dirty Bastard-style croon fits right in the R&B lineage, even if it is a very green branch of the tree. Like Clinton's P-Funk, *Expressions (2012 A.U.)* is best when it seems as though Perkins is barely trying, and somehow stumbling onto a twisted funk all his own. Of course, knowing what we know about Madlib's 18-hour beatmaking sessions, there's plenty of the traditional sweat in Perkins' music. Even as he claims his backup singers on "Me" had a few too many, the multi-tracked voices sound suspiciously like Perkins himself, straining for the just-slightly-off-key sound that is his trademark.

Like his funky predecessors, Dudley Perkins sees the sunny side of life, music, and God, with assistance from a few special herbs. If "Get On Up" doesn't get your laid-off, broke ass up and smiling, nothing will. *Rob Geary*



CROWDPLEASER & ST. PLOMB
2006

Mental Groove-Kompakt/SWI/CD
Building on a slew of successful solo singles and remixes since the late '90s, Geneva's Crowdpleaser (Gregor Schönborn) & St. Plomb (Vincent Kolb) bring a considerable amount of depth and well-honed style to their debut full-length together. Dubby, Basic Channel-infused textures pervade "New Times Roman" while touches of Errorsmith's swervy funk show up on "Today" as the two producers smear their influences all over the page but do so with aplomb. Perhaps the record's best track, though, is "Cash on Time," a poppy slab of vocal techno funk with Kate Wax on vox. She's not the only special guest—folks like Paris the Black Fu and Kalabrese also make appearances, but you'd be hard-pressed to pick out their contributions from this crowd. Despite Wax providing 2006's only vocal offering, the 11 tracks float by effortlessly, traversing era and genre like the best of Kompakt's style-surveying comps. *Ken Taylor*

angle. Far from creating just another electronically infused bedroom-rock record, Germany-based producer Rutger Hoedemaekers has integrated live instrumentation with electronic percussion, recalling the best moments of breakcore against a backdrop of '90s indie-rock romanticism. Cock Rock Disco prez Jason Forrester offers up another solid hit from his eccentric haven for groundbreaking artistry. *Fred Miketa*

AMMONCONTACT
WITH VOICES

Ninja Tune/UK/CD
If it seems like Ammoncontact just came out with a release, that's because they did. But Los Angeles DJs don't sleep, which is another way of saying that Ammoncontact's newest effort is filled with energy, and chilled-out groove to spare. Instrumental mind-trippers like the swaggering "One For Aylor" or the atmospheric "Elevation" keep the momentum rolling, while rap cameos from Lil Sci (on "Like This" and the head-bobbing title track) hold the hip-hop resume game tight. Though *With Voices* sometimes misses, it's mostly wet with impact. And if you need a break, the soothing pipes of Mia Doi Todd on "Earth's Children" and the avant tinkering of Daedelus on "Sleep Stasis" ought to give your ass, and spine, a well-deserved rest. *Scott Thill*

ART BRUT
BANG BANG ROCK AND ROLL

Downtown/US/CD
In this post-irony landscape, one would think that you could no longer get credit for deconstructing yourself. But judging from the inordinate amount of hype and ink spilled on Art Brut, that's simply not the case. Stacked with jagged, self-conscious tracks filled with snark and quirk, *Bang Bang Rock and Roll* plays like a poor man's *Pink Flag*, with Wire's angular rawk and sneering vocals but without their political insight. As party music goes, however, it's a slam dunk for the retro set. From the story of "Formed a Band" to the nostalgic love noise of "Emily Kane" and onward to the spoken-word thrasher "Modern Art," Art Brut is trying its hardest to not give a fuck while giving a fuck the entire time. *Scott Thill*

AWOL ONE
THE WAR OF ART

Cornerstone RAS/US/CD
Tony Martin (a.k.a. AWOL One) is a staple in L.A. hip-hop culture. Part of the influential Shape Shifters crew, he brings together a top-breed collective of producers (J-Zone, Grouch of Living Legends, DJ Rhetmatic) and MCs (KRS-One, 2Mex, Eyedea of Rhymesayers) to create a flow of quality rhymes over quality beats. It isn't a surprise, with AWOL One's track record, that this veteran hip-hop soldier is decorated as an "overlooked rap phenomenon," a statement clearly addressed in the single "Get By." Overlooked or not, *The War of Art* is an undeniable battle cry that Awolrus ain't going nowhere. *Esta*

BANCO DE GAIA
FAREWELL FERENGISTAN

Six Degrees/US/CD
On *Farewell Ferengistan*, Banco de Gaia's Toby Marks attacks materialism's home with more than just *Deep Space 9* references. (It's said that Ferengistan is Central Asia's—and *Star Trek's*—name for the greedy Western world.) Marks works his characteristically subtle sonics with socio-political concerns guiding him. The title track rolls out mellow East Indian vox and spooky piano tinklings while BdG actually rocks out on "Ynys Elen" before dabbling in ska ("Chingiz") and bhangra ("Kara Kum"). "Saturn Return" channels Riley and Reich, and Marks squeezes in references to Philip K. Dick's fave tune and Rudyard Kipling's "White Man's Burden" before hurling zings at Blair and Bush. *Stacy Meyn*

BARON ZEN
AT THE MALL

Stones Throw/US/CD
An unlikely release for a hip-hop label, *At the Mall* collects Baron Zen's "DIY 'til you die" punk rock from the Bay Area, circa 1989. Strummed and sung by Sweet Steve, with dysfunctional drums programmed by Peanut Butter Wolf (oh, now you get it?), *At the Mall* is a 14-track homage to jaded suburban teens drinking spiked Orange Julius and stealing Joy Division cassette tapes and comic books. The band's cover of Katrina and the Waves' 1985 classic "Walking on Sunshine" sums up the entire album. Suburbia sucks, but the boredom forces you to get fiercely creative. *Esta*

BASIC VOCAB
THE GENERAL DYNAMIC

AVX Music Group/US/CD
Though he cooked up some of the hottest Southern club joints of the late '90s (Trick Daddy's "Shut Up" and Trina's "Da Baddest Bitch"), Tony Galvin's head has always been in the underground. Unfortunately, his beats for his own group lack the bite that made his commercial tracks so hot. *The General Dynamic* toes the optimistic, straight-up hip-hop line, but we've heard it all before. There's nothing to knock about the work Galvin and MCs Mental Growth and JL Sorrell put in on their debut LP, but there's nothing to differentiate tracks like "Ease Back" and "The Trap" from any other LP on Sandbox Automatic, either. *Jesse Serwer*

BREAKAGE
THIS TOO SHALL PASS

Bassbin/UK/CD
Breakage has been making waves in the drum & bass scene since his haunting 2001 remix of Doc Scott's "Here Come the Drums." After a slew of future classic singles, he unleashes his debut LP filled with D&B explorations in dub science. *This Too Shall Pass* guides listeners through crackin' breakbeat minimalism, breathable sub-low bass, and drenched rude-bwoy samples. Highlights include the relentless "Ruff Dub" featuring Rohan, the half-time swing of "Losing Track," and the Metalheadz mimicry of "Untitled Jungle." Definitely worth seeking out. *Ryan Romana*

THE BROKEN KEYS
GRAVITY

Tru Thoughts/UK/CD
Ben Lamdin (Nostalgia 77) and Nathaniel Pearn (Natural Self) join forces to mend The Broken Keys. *Gravity* hails the crackling, juicy, grand-ole funk and soul of the '60s and '70s with a straight-up acid trip of organs, horns, and guitar feedback. It's pure time warp with all the glories of pre-dawn hip-hop breaks and jazz-fused riffs—in fact, it's scary how well two 21st century white boys from London have recreated 1976 Philly funk! "Slingshot Part 1" and "Slingshot Part 2" are straight-up b-boy anthems while "The Invisible" is right out of the movie *Black Caesar*. In the words of Wild Cherry: "Lay down that boogie and play that funky music 'til you die." *Esta*

ANDY CALDWELL
UNIVERSAL TRUTH

OM/US/CD
Longtime OMie Andy Caldwell came up through beloved Bay Area electronic ensemble Soulstice to become an überproducer for Naked Music, Yoshitoshi, and his own Uno imprint, scoring a large danceteria hit with Kaskadee's "Everything." Now he doles out heaping helpings of house with his debut artist album, and its potential monster single "Don't You Love Me." Pals appear, like fellow Soulstice singer Gina René, Afro-Mystik/Blackalicious alum Omega, Naked Music's Lisa Shaw and Amma, and Ultra's Latrice Barnett. Hooky basslines, sentient drum patterns, Caldwell's own live instrumentation, and *smoove* vocals butter up the eardrums, resulting in some of the yummiest S.F. house around. *Stacy Meyn*

CEx
ACTUAL FUCKING

Automation/US/CD
Rijyan "Cex" Kidwell fulfilled a recent erotic fantasy by recording himself racking up a videogame score while an escort pleased herself in the background. The title of *Actual Fucking*, though, hints that we might need to wash our hands after listening—luckily that's not the case. Kidwell assembled this most accomplished work with a backup post-rock band consisting of members from Joan of Arc, Dismemberment Plan, and others. He softens his white-soul vocals to let the band dabble in everything from David Byrne-styled Afro-funk ("Baltimore") to midnight blues-dub ("Denton") to !!!-mused disco-punk ("Los Angeles"). Kidwell has been pegged as an imitator and *Actual* won't lift that curse, but he can still be as incorrigible as he damn well wants. *Cameron Macdonald*

COUCH
FIGUR 5

Morr Music/GER/CD
Munich instrumentalists Couch provide a cool update to classic, moody, dream-rock groups like Baiter Space or Chapterhouse. Couch's dense, melancholic sound also echoes that of Ulrich Schnauss (had he been born in Chapel Hill adoring a Strat rather than in Berlin with a laptop) and fits in well with Morr's indie-pop love affair with electronic music. Couch's fine songs amble like a West Coast-bound Amtrak train gliding through the Plains states as grassland and grain silo landscapes shudder by.

Yes, some chin-stroking is inevitable when listening to *Figur 5*, but the evolving layers of melody also allow for eyes-closed rocking out—not a bad pastime if you ask me. *Tomas Palermo*

CSS
CANSEI DE SER SEXY

Sub Pop/US/CD
Self-deprecation is classic punk rock maneuvering. So when rock-candy-distorted bass climbs out of the unwieldy feedback, rubber-band drums, and chants of "CSS sucks" that open *Cansei De Ser Sexy*, it's pretty clear what listeners are in for: a hyper, self-conscious dance record that owes more to Detroit proto-punk than to Detroit techno. On the Brazilian six-piece's Sub Pop debut, CSS crawls through 11 tracks of dirty, danceable rock, with titles like "Music Is My Hot, Hot Sex" and "Let's Make Love And Listen to Death From Above." It's decidedly slutty fun. *Robbie Mackey*

DAEDELUS
DENIES THE DAY'S DEMISE

Mush/US/CD
He's done it again. Santa Monica's Daedelus unveils a kaleidoscopic puree of eclectic grooves drawing on bossa nova, found sounds, and Cary Grant-era soundtracks, precision-crafted with a delicious IDM flair. Sophisticated and exhilarating, this rich 14-track masterpiece meanders with jazzy, urban zeal through a surreal landscape grounded in the street-wise beat programming we've come to expect from the Mush camp. The sample selection



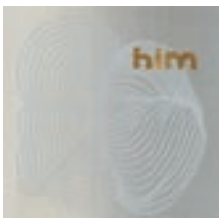
EXTRA GOLDEN
OK-OYOT SYSTEM

Thrill Jockey/US/CD
It would be easy to dismiss this collaboration between Washington, DC indie rockers Golden and Kenyan musician Otieno Jagwosi as overly academic world music. It was, after all, brought about by Golden member Ian Egleston's doctoral research into *benga*, a dance-y, electric guitar-driven Kenyan folk music. It's worthwhile to resist such a dismissal, however: The collaboration produced some very lively and unique-sounding tracks. While a pair of songs that the Golden boys penned before the trip ("It's Not Easy," "Tussin' and Fightin'") sound like standard boogie rock tunes, the points where the two groups meet each other half way ("Ok-Oyot System," "Ilando Gima Onge") are musically challenging and resonate with rich, emotional overtones. *Jesse Serwer*

is impeccable, and the fusion seamless, evoking dream-state imagery while keeping the heads nodding. Crafted the way an album should be, *Denies* is more than just the sum of its delightful little parts. Highly recommended. *Doug Morton*

DR. OCTAGON
THE RETURN OF DR. OCTAGON

OCD International/US/CD
While some might decry Dan the Automator's lack of participation in the Octagonecologist's resurrection, it's actually Berlin-based production unit One Watt Sun's eclectic beats that make this project worth paying attention to. Not that Kool Keith doesn't rise to the occasion; he delivers some of his best rhymes and most interesting concepts yet on this record (On "Trees," Keith, in his own aloof way, sounds genuinely concerned about deforestation and its effect on oxygen production). Much the same way The Automator's productions came out of left field in 1995, One Watt Sun's Gorillaz-meet-Chemical Brothers-in-a-carnival-freakshow beats sound different than anything you'll hear on a rap album this year. Of the three new Kool Keith LPs this summer, this is the one to cop. *Jesse Serwer*



DROP THE LIME
WE NEVER SLEEP

Tigerbeat6/US/CD
Luca Venezia's last joint, *This Means Forever*, could provoke epileptic seizures with its noisecore breakbeats, ADD-added edits, and excessive ideas. This time, he has mellowed...slightly. Venezia tempers his beats down to steady, 4/4 dubstep clomps ("Hotsauce Grillz," "E Lock") that romp well. Rhythms kept simple never compromise any power or guile here. Venezia's menthol-coated hollering connects the NYC basement party circuit with hardcore punk, while his blue-eyed croons on the ballads will



make many listeners proud to be single and dateless. Otherwise, this record's money shots are worth the tinnitus. *Cameron Macdonald*

KIERAN HEBDEN AND STEVE REID
THE EXCHANGE SESSION VOL. 2

Domino/UK/CD
On the second part of the real-time soundclash between instrumentalist Kieran Hebden and drummer/jazzman Steve Reid, these two sonic innovators manage to match the spontaneous chaos of the first *Exchange Session*. What begins as an ambient experience transforms into a blast of sampled horns and bleeps on track one, and then cools down into a tribal-like tranquility on track two only to re-intensify; the eerie calm of the third and final track properly closes out this exploratory union. How Reid and Hebden manage to keep up with each other here is baffling and, if anything, their inexplicable chemistry is primarily what makes these albums worthwhile. *Max Herman*

HIM
PEOPLES

Bubblecore/US/CD
It's about structure and composition this go 'round for HiM brain trust Doug Scharin. Picking up some of the same tricks featured on 2003's *Many In High Places Are Not Well*, but focusing more on arresting marimba melodies than far-out polyrhythms, Scharin and company (a list of contributors would take up the rest of the issue) craft adventurous Afro-pop, cabaña suites of sweet guitars and sweeter vocals, and texture-heavy experiments in smoothed-over world jazz. Basically, it's the kind of brave pop album those Toronto hipsters in Broken Social Scene fail to make every couple of years; where they fall short (read: elegantly matching restraint with bombast), Scharin absolutely excels. *Robbie Mackey*

ISAN
PLANS DRAWN IN PENCIL

Morr Music/GER/CD
Antony Ryan and Robin Saville are patient folk. Over the course of their 15-year, seven-album career, the long-distance production duo has perfected a brand of simple, sad, slow-going pop. Like most of the Morr Music crowd, Isan's songs take time, doggedly emerging rather than flying out of the gates. On "Plans Drawn in Pencil," Ryan and Saville rely on familiar analog synths and mostly drumless beats. As a result, the record can sound a bit dated and unimaginative at times, but few folks in the IDM world have such a knack for making small sound this big. *Robbie Mackey*

JIMPSTER
AMOUR

Freerange/UK/CD
Jamie Odell's chops as a producer assure that this album couldn't turn out bad, but the addition of a range of vocalists helps to bring this largely downbeat, soul-packed album to a higher level. On "Left and Right," for example, Capitol A lays down mesmerizingly chilled rhymes, while Elsa Hedburg's throaty singing gives "Slippin'" a slinking sexiness. A few tracks veer into other genres: The techno-esque "Seventh Wave" has layers of floating synths, and "Love Like This," with Diamonddancer, traverses house depths. Warm, lush, and ready for the dancefloor. *Luciana Lopez*

ZIGGY KINDER
AKROBATIK

Ware/GER/CD
Kinder, a frizzy-haired, Cologne-based minimal house and techno producer, had my ears on lock from his first 12" singles on Ware. Where the work of fellow producers Matthew Dear and Richie Hawtin is fixated on the rhythmic repetitions central to the minimal genre, Kinder takes an abrupt left turn towards melody. Of course, plenty of metrical blips and soda-pop gurgles still pan across the listening threshold, but these micro-noises are only part of the audio palette. Kinder conjures some superb club-rocking numbers like "Augenblicksposer," which unfolds like a purple orchid decorated with lovely reverberating tones. Then "Der Trick Mit Der Kick" arrives halfway in—any listeners *not* on the dancefloor for this one smoked way too much hash. *Akrobatik* has me doing flips. *Tomas Palermo*

JAMIE LIDELL
MULTIPLY ADDITIONS

Warp/UK/CD
Glitched-up crooner Jamie Lidell has commented that there is but a thin partition between arrangement and derangement. And with this remix and reinterpretation EP, the mercurial torch singer/bearer lets his colleagues push the source material's

honest Stax homage into darker, more disconnected territory. The rhythmic regurgitations by Four Tet, Luke Vibert, and Matthew Herbert are dilated and dusky compared to the originally splashy, shimmering material. Freeform Reform, Mocky, and Herbert—the latter two kind souls assisted Lidell with the original, *Multiply*—even take it down a notch to a more pushing-air pace. In contrast, Lidell's live piano takes celebrate the purity of his English blues. *Tony Ware*

LORD JAMAR
THE 5% ALBUM

Babygrande/US/CD
You may recognize him from *Oz* or *The Sopranos*, but Lord Jamar's main gig is dropping beats and rhymes for Brand Nubian. On this solo debut, Jamar uses clever samples (Chicago's "25 or 6 to 4" sparks a Dead Prez-sounding "Revolution") and detailed storytelling ("The Corner, The Streets" with Grand Puba) to delve into the philosophy of the Islamic-oriented Five Percent movement, whose tenets include the idea that each man is his own God. The Nation of Gods and Earths (the Five Percent Nation's official name) believe the enlightened few (5% of the population) must use their knowledge to liberate the masses. Throughout, Jamar translates this faith into intelligent rhymes designed to wake up a gun-fixated hip-hop nation. *James Mayo*

MEKALEK
LIVE AND LEARN

Glow-in-the-Dark/US/CD
Mekalek's vibrant debut, *Live and Learn*, is filled with hard drums and good vibes. After all, with appearances by Cool Calm Pete and the revered Percee P, it's no wonder the project is such an easy listen. Yet one of the album's high points ("Beat Break #2") finds Mekalek's production prevailing without the aid of an MC. With heavy drums wrapped around colorful melodies, most of the tracks are sequenced with entertaining change-ups that keep the album lively. Besides a few beats that sound too similar to one another, *Live and Learn* is a triumphant debut. *David Ma*

JEFF MILLS
BLUE POTENTIAL

Uncivilized World/US/CD
The usual tympanum-ripping, lightning-speed mix from The Wizard (a.k.a. Jeff Mills) this is not. *Blue Potential*, a live recording of the Detroit legend's in-concert collaboration with the National Orchestra of Montpellier, is the latest in a line of recently fashionable classical treatments of popular music. But where London Sinfonietta's work with Aphex Twin last year seemed a simple grafting of high-concept art projects, the mix on *Blue Potential* is more fluid and natural. Mills' eerie, epic brand of Detroit techno lends itself easily to the sweeping scope of orchestral arrangement. Classic cuts like "The Bells," played large via the apocalyptic bombast of the NMO's horn section, are joyously transformative. *Anna Balkrishna*

MR. LIF
MO' MEGA

Definitive Jux/US/CD
After doing time with stellar Def Jux outfit The Perceptionists, the thick-dreadlocked Mr. Lif locks street poetry into massive beats throughout *Mo' Mega*. Fueled with a political savvy and social conscience unheard in some time, Lif does not confuse meaning and songwriting, and he never allows message to override a dope hook. And *Mo' Mega* is full of them: the driving "Ultra-Mega," the guitar rockin' "Brothaz," and the record's most unique cut, the *dancehall*ton "Washitup." The Boston MC gets his hustle and flow together on a record certain to lift him to the status of lyrical legend. *Derek Beres*

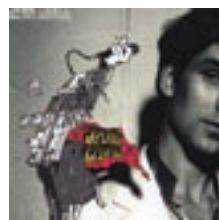
NINO MOSCHELLA
THE FIX

Ubiquity/US/CD
Opting out of computer-driven drum loops, Italian-Irish multi-instrumentalist Nino Moschella chose broomsticks and handclaps for his debut, and he ties it all together with a soulful voice. *The Fix* is such a unique R&B record that it barely warrants that designation. But the soul is heavy, as when he screeches so elegantly above a Zeppelin-fueled drum beat on "Strong Man." Organs, bass, guitars, and drums are the backdrop for some serious grooves while Nino's lyrics stay up front and the soul junkies get an unforeseen fix. *Derek Beres*

MOTOR
KLUNK

Novamute/US/CD
Damn, I thought this was the Motor who issued those amazingly quirky minimal techno 12"s for audio.nl a while back. *This* Motor (the French Mr. No and the

American Bryan Black) trade in bulbous, thuggish, big-room techno that leaves thick tire tracks across your back (lapsed industrial fans will dig it, too). Their debut album, *Klunk*, largely lacks subtlety; you can imagine action/thriller-oriented filmmakers selecting tracks like "Black Powder," "Stuka Stunt," and "Spazm" for high-intensity scenes. And for that function, Motor is masterful. On *Klunk*, the duo essentially takes the filthy, aggressive *knarz* techno patented by Shitkatapult to the mega-club—and perhaps to the bank. *Dave Segal*



OSUNLADE
AQUARIAN MOON

BBE/UK/CD
Only a sensitive soul such as multifaceted producer Osunlade would title a song "The Day We Met For Coffee." This song, like many on his second proper artist album, combines a variety of chilled instrumentation (vibes, acoustic guitar, string arrangements, and ethnic percussion) with steady house and downbeat grooves for an introspective and colorful listen. *Aquarian Moon* recalls the expanses of global fusion jazz musicians Airtto Moreira, Deodato, and Andy Narell—free thinkers who some say degraded trad jazz's proper arrangements with hippie-dippy noodling. The disc (written as an ode to the Greek island Santorini) sounds more like the work of the latter producer, with outstanding headphone jams ("Oia In Winter") butting up against future jazz club goodness ("SokinSikartep"). *Tomas Palermo*



PACKFM
WHUTDUZFMSTAND4?

QN5/US/CD
PackFM first made a name for himself as a graffiti writer and battle rap champion in the late '90s, but on his long-awaited solo debut the witty Brooklynite finally



LI ALIN
ALL IN

Asphodel/US/CD
Li Alin is a mystery, and for now that's just as well. The story behind her mournful, raw songs—some with electronic embellishments, and all sung in French and English—might dilute the power of their presence. Backing her vocals with echoed pianos and skin-crawling cello strains, she creates authentically desolate atmospheres that re-claim Joy Division comparisons from the boy bands. When Alin whispers "My soul is bleeding/Today my heart is snowing," you believe it. Like a mistress sequestered in a tower, she contemplates love and the futility of life with heart-breaking precision. The eccentricities of Alin's incantations make them avant-goth of the highest order. Jokers say the goth dance goes pull the rope, kick the cat, toss the basket. Li Alin's compelling compositions add another step: rattle your bones. *Rachel Shimp*



PEACHES
IMPEACH MY BUSH

XL Recordings/US/CD
She's hairy, trashy, and oh-so-clever—and she's got a political streak to match the best of 'em. It's hard to resist the self-proclaimed "Queen of the Electro-Clap," and *Impeach My Bush*, Merrill Nisker's third full-length, reminds us why: Peaches' dry, fly, steely wit wins you over while catchy punk hooks keenly package her words. *Impeach* embraces more rock 'n' roll than previous releases—check the soaring guitar riffs on "Boys Wanna Be Her"—which makes sense, since Peaches has admitted to holding Joan Jett in the highest regard. It's Peaches' humor that keeps her sexy camp fresh: On "Fuck or Kill" she proclaims, "I'd rather fuck who I want than kill who I am told to." Ya gotta love a pimp. *Melanie Chen*

gets the chance to flex his lyrical prowess. As this album has been so many years in the making, Pack aptly makes every moment count. Sometimes grave, sometimes goofy, this agile MC bounces from his trouble staying in school ("Lessons") to his habit of telling outlandish lies ("Excuses"). And despite his reputation for being a backpacker, Pack proves to be quite the party starter with songs like the vivacious, East Indian-flavored single "Stomp." *Max Herman*

PAN.AMERICAN
FOR WAITING, FOR CHASING

Mosz/AUS/CD
Pan.American is the iconic transformation of Mark Nelson from guitarist/singer in the Kranky-birthing band Labradford into a computer overlord. Five albums and several split EPs later, Nelson has spun his penchant for dub and noise into a captivating long-player that defies the archetypal ambient template. Somewhere in between the bubbling sound waves and incessant pitch shifting exists an intimate center: the sound of the swamp, a multi-celled organism reproducing, a brain hard at work. There is some thoroughly mystical programming and an array of acoustic instruments at work here, making this is by far Pan.American's most inspired and complex effort. *Fred Miketa*

POSTHUMAN
THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC

Sancho
Mystery Year
Seed Recordings/UK/CD
The Seed label, still relatively unknown in the US, has a short but incredible history of throwing diverse events in London—eclectic parties in tube stations and other non-club venues—and their label reflects the sonic range of these gatherings. Posthuman

is the alias of label bosses (and cousins) Josh Doherty and Rich Bevan, and *The Peoples Republic* is a lovely, contemplative album, filled with distant guitars and sad synths, equal parts My Bloody Valentine and Skam Records. Sancho offers similar fare, even more wistful, but on *The Sea and Cake's* tip. Both records are worth tracking down, and indicative of a strong future for the label. *Matt Earp*

THE PROCUSSIONS
5 SPARROWS FOR 2 CENTS

Rawkus/US/CD
One might think that being the first act signed to the resurfaced Rawkus Records would leave an up-and-coming group like The ProcuSSIONS feeling somewhat under pressure—especially considering that the label's graduates include the likes of Mos Def and Talib Kweli. But on their sophomore album, The ProcuSSIONS sound as comfortable as can be while laying down their percussion-centric beats and socially alert raps. While not every track is as catchy as the lead single "The Storm" or as thoughtfully constructed as the anti-child abuse anthem "Little People," this trio will certainly help Rawkus step back out on the right foot. *Max Herman*

PSALM ONE
THE DEATH OF FREQUENT FLYER

Rhymesayers/US/CD
On her Rhymesayers debut, former chemist Psalm One lets it be known that as an MC, she's more than just "good for a girl." While her rhymes do transcend gender lines, on cuts like "Rapper Girls"—in which scantily clad female MCs get the boot—she addresses issues most male MCs won't. With a steady supply of soulful, sample-driven productions from fellow Chicagoans Overflo, Thaione Davis, and others, Psalm delivers an up-close look into her complex personality and intriguing opinions. If she can only sharpen her hook writing (see the sloppy chorus on "Rap Star") she'll be an even more versatile talent. *Max Herman*

PSAPP
THE ONLY THING I EVER WANTED

Domino/US/CD
Considering their album covers are filled with sketches of cats, it's not surprising that Carim Clasmann and Galia Durant, who record as Psapp, demonstrate a certain feline curiosity in their music. They claim to "make songs with little noises poking out" and the album is filled with dainty audio trinkets that fit that description, gentle pop bubbling over with the clicks and clacks of idle hands striking triangles and (supposedly) utensils. "This Way" even exudes a Tim Burton-like atmosphere, swaying with dark bells and strings. *Patrick Sisson*

LUISITO QUINTERO
PERCUSSION MADNESS

BBE-Rapster/US/CD
Cutting his teeth touring with Louie Vega's Elements of Life band, Venezuelan percussionist Luisito Quintero covers seriously diverse terrain on his debut. After the localized, tribal Latin rhythms of the first two tracks, he launches into a Fela accolade worthy of Nigerian honors; from there he enters the dancefloor (little surprise as Vega is producer) through mambo and R&B. Most impressive is the range of forms Quintero so effortlessly blends. His hands move with such rapidity and poise as to suggest a rather controlled and enjoyable madness. *Derek Beres*

SCSI-9
THE LINE OF NINE

Kompakt/GER/CD
Moscovite minimalists Anton Kubikov and Maxim Milutenko have long been pillars of Russia's underground dance scene, but it wasn't until Kompakt included their 2003 break-out hit "All She Wants Is" on the taste-making *Total 5* comp that the duo gained international notoriety. *The Line Of Nine* sees the techno twosome return with a gorgeously nuanced and hypnotic collection of lounge-y, 4/4 thumps that, despite never deviating from the midtempo range, prove deceptively diverse. Weaving an array of delicate, fluttering melodies through each of the album's 12 tracks, the duo builds on the trance-tinged melancholy and airy elegance served up on last autumn's *On The Edge* EP (all three tracks thankfully present here), patching pastoral pop, smoky seduction, and icy thrust into a surprisingly vibrant, multi-hued tapestry. *James Jung*

SENSATIONAL
SENSATIONAL MEETS KOUHEI

WordSound/US/CD
Sensational (formerly Torture) debuted in 1993 on Jungle Brothers' *J. Beez Wit The Remedy*, then busted out strong solo with 1997's *Loaded With Power*, a maverick, lo-fi piece of speaker-wrecking bass, chest-caving beats, and gruff, marble-mouthed

self-aggrandizement. That album has been Sensational's peak—until now. With his seventh album, the Brooklyn MC finds his ideal beatmaker in Kouhei—Sensational seems energized by the Japanese producer's oddly angled and warped tracks, which sound like a heady amalgam of El-P and Krush's textural and rhythmic components. The science here is deep, and Sensational's rumbling muttering complements Kouhei's next-level funk. Autechre and Spectre remixes seal the deal. *Dave Segal*

SOLO ANDATA
FYRIS SWAN

Hefty/US/CD
A looming tapestry of undulating, post-rockian, free jazz-tinged, minutiae-detailing, electro-acoustic brilliance, *Fyris Swan's* chest-tugging magnitude is a striking testament to the role of time, space, and technology in composition. Solo Andata's restrained and measured efficacy benefits from their separation (its members live in Australia and Sweden), as the labored deconstruction applied to every element forms the album's hefty backbone. Each pluck and bowed, processed sound builds over an hour, culminating in the perfectly realized "Midnight." *Brian Paul*

SOYLENT GREEN
LA FORZA DEL DESTINO

Playhouse/GER/CD
Soylent Green (a.k.a. Roman Flügel) sure loves his TB-303. Half of Alter Ego (responsible for the deservedly huge "Rocker" in 2004), Flügel works the hell out of the synthesizer on the acid-tinged minimal tracks here. But Flügel is best when he's more complex, as with the piano that makes "Camera Obscura" so much more interesting than the drab "Stay Stupid." However, he's best on tech-house where melodic layers warm his stripped-down beats, and on slowly unwound tracks like "Low Pt. 1." It's on the in-between stuff—not quite warm, not quite experimental—that he stumbles a bit. *Luciana Lopez*

STOP DISCO MAFIA
YOU DON'T WANNA KNOW

Proptronix/US/CD
It's a shame the word "silly" is saddled with such a negative connotation, "cause Stop Disco Mafia (Berlinese electro movers Ronald Gonko and Nora Below) make silly music that's downright brilliant. Their debut album is a kaleidoscopic brain-blow, brim-filled with psychedelic headaches and colorful explosions. The duo's press release passes it off as sonic slapstick, but the record's frantic breakbeats and aural nonsense is strangely nuanced, and much more refined than a pie in the face. *Robbie Mackey*

THINK ABOUT LIFE
THINK ABOUT LIFE

Alien8/CAN/CD
After giving us a slew of accessible rock acts, all eyes are on Montreal for the next great hype. Think About Life certainly has the hooks required for world domination, but they drench them in dirty Casios and lo-fi beats. From the muffled melodies of "Paul Cries" to the dancey introspection on "Serious Chords," Think About Life's debut record has more in common with noise bands than their Bowie-approved contemporaries. Topped off by some guest verses from Subtitle and stunning artwork from Jack Dylan, the self-titled record is a messy and cerebral masterpiece that will probably never blow up. *Josiah Hughes*

TIED & TICKLED TRIO
A.R.C.

Morr Music/GER/CD-DVD
Tied & Tickled Trio is the side project of Markus and Micha Acher, notably members of The Notwist, 13+God, and Lali Puna. Their other projects found them dabbling in definitive electro-pop, but T&T is committed to organic jazz. Mainly a DVD for the captivating concert film *Observing Systems*, the release also includes a CD with the unreleased track "A.R.C." The composition washes in and out of melodious horns and electronic swells—a 20-minute dissection of the group's radiant dynamics. Packed with extras like music videos and European TV interviews, *A.R.C.* comes highly recommended for those enamored by the work of the Acher brothers. *Josiah Hughes*

UNAI
A LOVE MODERNE

Force Tracks/GER/CD
Plenty of producers dabble in airy, keyboard-driven dance tracks that attempt to recreate new wave attitude. But Erik Möller's lovelorn and edgy reincarnation of '80s synth-pop on *A Love Moderne* makes similar contemporary attempts sound as relevant and refined as A Flock of Seagulls. Shimmering elastic melodies establish the requisite dreamy vibe but Möller's use of washed-out synths, windswept pro-

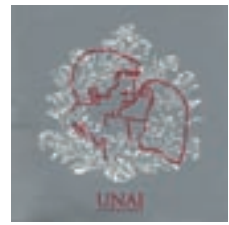
duction, and his own fragile voice creates a real sense of desolation and drama. Add a set of minimal and mechanized beats sculpted in a manner that recalls Ellen Allien and you've got the formula for a dark, romantic masterpiece. *Patrick Sisson*

RICARDO VILLALOBOS
SALVADOR

Frisbee Tracks/GER/CD
Villalobos is one of techno's most distinctive, innovative producers. This is apparent even from the eight early tracks (circa 1998-2001) gathered on *Salvador*. Villalobos is the thinking person's hedonist, the party animal's philosopher. His rep as a debauched DJ notwithstanding, Villalobos on wax is the master of the epic "ketamine house" style that endlessly fascinates. Although not as complex and psychotropic as his later work, *Salvador's* tracks move with sidewinder stealth, trickily shimmying toward paradise swathed in intriguing textures. Villalobos imbues even his poppiest moments with a melancholy paranoia and an ominous thrust that suggest tense chase scenes more than sweet dancefloor release. *Dave Segal*

WASTELAND
ALL VERSUS ALL

Transparent/US/CD
An incredibly deep, rich, and dark record, *All Versus All* takes DJ Scud and I-Sound's current fascination with dubstep and grime and refracts it through their musical history. The extreme electronics of Scud's Ambush and I-Sound's Full Watts label appear here, as do hints of Scud's sonic collage work with Hrvatski and I-Sound's sweeter side with To Rococo Rot, but the end result is uniquely their own. Alive with sounds—either animal, musical, or mechanical—tracks like the slinky "Enticer," the siren-calling "Himmel," and the unstoppably robotic "Technology" could serve as the soundtrack to a Gene Wolfe novel. Headier than their last release, *October*, and worth every single sonic second. *Matt Earp*



Subtle

SUBTLE
WISHINGBONE

Lex/UK/CD-DVD
The past 12 months have been life-changing for Bay Area hip-hop sextet Subtle. In surviving and recovering from a devastating tour-van accident that left keyboardist Dax Pierson quadriplegic, the mettle of these Oakland boys has been put to the test. But Pierson and his band silenced fears that their spirit was broken as Subtle returned to the road and Dax began a long rehabilitation process last year. *Wishingbone*, the group's first release since the accident, and its first since 2004's *A New White*—is a triumphant collection of new material, re-approaches, and remixes. Regardless of its small stature, this tease for a follow-up full-length has a certain gravity to it, especially on songs like "I Love L.A. II" and the wide-winged remix of Beck's "Farewell Ride." This EP feels like a study in perseverance, with Subtle emerging from a hellish 2005 as one of the most determined and inspiring bands of 2006. *Robbie Mackey*



Tolcha

TOLCHA
GESTALT

Meta Polyp/GER/CD
Bubbling up through the cracks in the Berlin sidewalk and drifting out of hot dance clubs into misty parks early in the morning, the multi-instrumentalist four-piece Tolcha fuses dub, hip-hop, and a bit of grime, heavily done up with equal parts dome-scratchin' thought and body-moving sexiness. Led by DJ Shir Khan, they grabbed attention with the solid "Fokus" single on their Meta Polyp label. Now they've collected their collaborations into *Gestalt*, which contains Rhythm & Sound-esque dub pieces ("Bild Zeit"), Kitty-Yo head-nodders ("Tomchak" and "Fokus"), and some just plain good, crunchy, bassy dance music (album standout "Crushed Ice"). Vocal collabs sweeten the deal, with turns by Berlin everywhere-man RQM (The Tape/Al Haca), Ras T-Weed of Rocker's HiFi, Sasha Perera (the playful voice of Jahcoozi), Rider Shafique (Pressure Drop), and the very funny Maxx from The Goats. Forget what you knew about Viennese nu-dub and move to the Tolcha beat. *Matt Earp*



THE KNIFE
SILENT SHOUT
Album out July 25

'Deliciously twisted pop music' (NME)

'A volatile macabre fantasy scooped out of Tim Burton's brain and scored by Giorgio Moroder, Silent Shout is The Knife's creepiest and craziest album yet.' (Vice 9/10)



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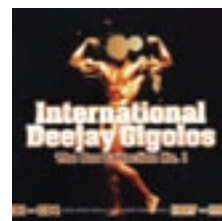
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DJ Hell



FALLING IN, OUT OF, AND BACK IN LOVE WITH ONE OF GERMANY'S INDEPENDENT STALWARTS

INTERNATIONAL DEEJAY GIGOLOS: THE BOX COLLECTION NO. 1
International DeeJay Gigolo/GER/5CD

ABE DUQUE: AMERICAN GIGOLO II
International DeeJay Gigolo/GER/CD

If there's one thing—and there are actually many things—that head Gigolo DJ Hell knows about running a record label, it's that a little aesthetic goes a *long* way. His International DeeJay Gigolo imprint—also an artist-booking agency and club-promotion team—has been a major player in the world of international clubbing since its inception 10 years ago.

Quickly approaching the label's 200th release, Hell (a.k.a. Helmut Geier) brings forth *The Box Collection No. 1*, a keen representation of IDG's early history. The collection compiles the label's first five comps, which were lobbed liberally (about one for every 10 pieces of vinyl they released) at non-vinyl-buying dance music fans. What the set primarily showcases, though—besides the Gigolo's penchant for falling into, out of, and back into vogue—is Hell's aim to stay true to his defining ethos, combining streamlined package design and all manner of repetitive beats with the zeitgeist of a young, fashion-obsessed, pills-and-booze-imbibing post-rave culture... for better or worse.

In the mid-'90s, Geier, already a veteran DJ and producer in Germany, channeled his love for everything from early hip-hop and electro to EBM to techno and house into Gigolo 01, a split 12" between DJ Naughty and David Carretta, featuring the jacking, onomatopoeic tribute to Kraftwerk, "Boing Bum Tschag," and the banging "Innerwood." Friends from all over the world, like Detroit techno don Jeff Mills and the cross-dressing Chris Korda, signed up and were soon contributing classics like "The Sun" and the particularly political "Save the Planet, Kill Yourself" (both featured on Disc One), respectively, to the fledgling IDG.

But it was the years between 1998 and 2000 when the label hit pay dirt, having mined the likes of Miss Kittin and The Hacker, DMX Krew, and Dynamic Bass System for the coming electroclash movement—not to mention securing wunderkind Tiga to mix *American Gigolo*, an early survey

of the synth-pop substrain. Kittin and Hacker's "1982" and "Frank Sinatra" (on Disc Two, and released long before they were internationally known) came to define the genre, with Kittin's detached, purred non-sequiturs echoed by The Hacker's austere, electro-dance-heavy production. While *The Box Collection No. 1* essentially stops at the end of 2000—well before the electroclash craze ended—more experimental offerings like Silvie Marks' slyly brilliant "Wonderfull" and Tampopo's "Add Boiling Water" pointed Gigolo in different, invigorating directions.

The label weathered the inevitable backlash while stars like Kittin and Tiga continued to plow forward on other labels (notable, Turbo and Astralwerks), further developing their DJ and live performances. Folks like Abe Duque, the mixer behind the new compilation *American Gigolo II*, emerged with his own 2005 release, *So Underground It Hurts* (IDG), and faithfully followed Gigolo's new, more refined path, as transgender model Amanda LePore stepped in to replace Arnold Schwarzenegger's buff physique as the company's fresh (if ultra-synthetic) new face.

Duque's "What You Gonna Do" falls early on *American Gigolo II*, providing a beefy tech-house follow-up to Crack We Are Rock's chopped-up, vocal funk-driven "Animal Trap (Tommie Sunshine Mix)" before the mix segues into Tiefschwarz's Italo- and electro-inspired "Blow." Duque looks back as often as he looks forward, making sure to include early Gigolos (Mills, Richard Bartz, Carretta) alongside newer torchbearers (Freaks, Psychonauts, even P. Diddy). He presents not just the pervasive styles that Hell and crew brought—and continue to bring—to the masses, but the undeniably deep bench that ensures their solid future. *Ken Taylor*

Comp Reviews
8.06



PERLON ALLSTARS: SUPERLONGEVITY VOL. 4

Perlon/GER/2CD
 Staying true to their minimal aesthetic for nearly a decade now, Perlon has become quite the trusted brand, and they once again bring all the perennial Perlonites together for the fourth installment of the *Superlongevity* series. Label chiefs Sammy Dee and Zip, along with Matt John, Baby Ford, and Ricardo Villalobos, keep the twisted minimal pendulum swaying while Stephan Goldmann and Dandy Jack sprinkle some robotic funk into the selection. The label's proclivity for odd, surgical vocal manipulations percolates through tracks like Dimbiman's "First Laki" and Markus Nikolai's "Wheelsucker." Narcotic Syntax pulls out all the vocal stops with "Raptors Delight," which, even without the ornithophobic lyrics, is one helluva snazzy electro-funk number that nicely rounds out the reduced glitchery of the album. And leave it to Montreal sweetheart Marc Leclair (a.k.a. Horror Inc., Akufen) to cap the compilation perfectly with the exotic strings of "The Absent." Super indeed. *Doug Morton*

ence (he spins at San Francisco's longest running underground dance night, 1002 Nights). *La Kahena* takes a striking collection of heavy bhangra, hip-hop, and dub tracks and speeds them through alleys, bazaars, favelas, and shantytowns before winding up at the local hot spot clutching a cold Tango (the preferred Algerian beer). Remixers Bassnectar, Sandeep Kumar, Makyo, Ex-Centric, and Bill Laswell bring their best efforts to each track. *Tomas Palermo*

FABRICLIVE 27: DJ FORMAT

FABRIC 28: WIGGLE
 Fabric/UK/CD
 Fabric's DJ series is the most complete library of mixed music from every genre and the London nightclub always seems to have their finger on just the right tastemaker to deliver the goods. In the case of their latest two collections, Format represents for the hip-hop/funk nation while the Wiggle duo rounds up the latest electro-house cattle and drives them to the slaughterhouse. Format gets style points for linking Cut Chemist and Lyrics Born tracks to their obscure funk ancestors including the Karachi Prison Band, Nina Simone, and Ananda Shankar. Conversely, Wiggle plays it conservative with tech-house numbers from labels like NRK, Poker Flat, and Systematic. In the end, Format rocks steady while Wiggle wobbles like Jell-O. *Tomas Palermo*

THE CONGOS & FRIENDS: FISHERMAN STYLE

Blood and Fire/UK/2CD
 Produced by Lee Perry during his Black Ark era, The Congos' 1977 debut *Heart of the Congos* is a must-have for reggae fans. After being approached by The Congos' Cedric Myton, the folks at Blood and Fire wisely chose "The Fisherman" from that classic to feature in its one-rhythm series. For serious fans, this release features 22 different artists' interpretations of the "Fisherman" rhythm, plus remixes of the original and dub track. Organized into two discs, roughly according to the artists' ages, the versions stick close to the spirit of the original, with newcomer Lutan Fyah bringing the most heat ("Whitewash Walls") and vets like Gregory Isaacs providing context ("Spot and Beat the Bank"). *James Mayo*

DEFECTED IN THE HOUSE: MIAMI 06

Defected/UK/3CD
 London's Defected Records revisits steamy Miami with this monster triple-threat of delicious, WMC-tested soulful boogie. Mixed by label founder Simon Dunmore, each of the three thematic discs sparkles with top cats and kitties in deep dance: "Sunset" warms the eve with funky electro-disco; "Sundown" brings on sunny saxophones, house pianos from heaven, and yummy acapellas; and "Sunrise" returns to the discotheque, '80s-style. Need names? Reel People, Blaze, Playgroup, The MuthaFunkaz, Faze Action, Afromento, Byron Stingily, P-Funkateers, Anthony Acid, Roy Ayers... For when you care enough to play the very best. *Stacy Meyn*

DIRTY DIAMONDS 3

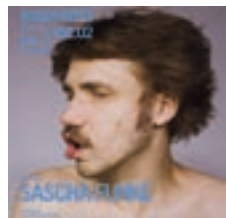
Diamondtraxx/FRA/CD
 The D-I-R-T-Y.com collective is known for resurrecting and consolidating genre-spanning mixes. Yet with *Dirty Diamonds 3*, the crew doesn't capture the charm—or cohesiveness—of its past releases. The disc contains ambient film scores, weird French records, and obscure b-sides, but the result is only interesting on paper. Filmic numbers like Francois de Roubaix's "Plongee de Glace" create huge lulls in the comp, while slow songs like Nico's "Afraid" are awkwardly paired with electronic pop songs, like Isolée's "Enrico." With such random sequencing, *Dirty Diamonds 3* is a purposefully unconventional mix—but more so, it's completely unmoving. *David Ma*

ECCENTRIS: SKIN IS IN

Dessous/GER/CD
STEVE BUG: BUGNOLOGY 2
 Poker Flat/GER/CD
 Steve Bug's Dessous label provided music for American photog Sacha Dean Biyan's website; now, Biyan returns the favor for Bug's *Skin Is In* comp. Dessous' catalogue, which leans towards deep, sexy house, pairs well with Biyan's photography, which tends to favor hot, half-naked models. Bug compiled Disc One, a more laid-back set than the slightly uptempo Disc Two, mixed by Àme of Sonar Kollektiv. *Bugnology 2* continues Bug's series (started in 2004) with a superbly mixed, digitally sliced-and-diced collection of minimal beats, techno, and house. Its range is more broad than that of *Skin*, and it succeeds more deeply as a result. *Luciana Lopez*

CHEB I SABBABH: LA GHRIBA-LA KAHENA REMIXED

Six Degrees/US/CD
La Kahena Remixed is a perfect entry point for global-beat fence sitters with the impression that world-electronic music is merely ethno-trance masquerading as club pressure. Cheb I Sabbah has perfected his Arabic, North African, and South Asian blend over three artist albums, one remix album, and several DJ mixes, in addition to this Algerian's three decades of discotheque experi-



ELEKTRONISCHE MUSIK: INTERKONTINENTAL 5

Traum-Kompakt/GER/CD
 Traum shakes up the format a bit with their latest comp, delivering a solid mixed release rather than their traditional track-by-track presentation. Riley "Triple R" Reinhold showcases the label's current output with a punchy blend spanning from dirty, bass-granulated numbers from Lars Wickinger and Mashkraft to the shuffling tech-house stylings of Jesse Somfay to an ambient outro by sheer bloody genius Nathan Fake. But make no mistake—the meat of this 14-track sandwich is pure electronic 4/4 poundage, during which even Primate's Ortin Cam comes out to play. Out with the chin stroking, in with the pump. Me likey. *Doug Morton*

KITSUNÉ MAISON COMPILATION 2

Kitsuné/FRA/CD
 The Kitsuné *maison* ("fox house" in Japanese/French) sits in Paris, claiming allegiances to Daft Punk but also keeping an ear on London by releasing Bloc Party exclusives. This compilation forges French Touch-ed glam with a healthy smattering of British grit. Here DFA1979's Mstrkrft arm remixes '70s-rock revivalists Wolfmother while Azzido Da Bass (featuring the singer from Zoot Woman, Les Rythmes Digitales' other band) borders Joakim (Tigersushi's electro art director). Not heard Digitalism? Simian Mobile Disco? Sky percolates these days? For the foxy about to dance, Kitsuné salutes you. *Tony Vare*

MACHINE DRUM

MERGERZ & ACQUISITIONZ
 Merck/US/2CD
 This massive double CD (Merck's last remix compilation before they close their doors in the fall) is Machine Drum and 33 of his closest friends remixing Machine Drum. It's sprawlily, wonderfully overwhelming. The sound is classic Merck (Skam and Replex keyboards filtered through the lens of Miami hip-hop), and a huge number of the tracks stand up to multiple listening. This reviewer's faves happen to be mixes by Eustachian, Deceptikon, Scrubber Fox, and Wake, but pick it up and choose your own adventure. *Matt Earp*

MADE IN BRASIL

WordSound/US/CD
 The recent *baile* funk fever might lead to the conclusion that that's all Brazilian music has to offer. Nothing could be further from the truth, and that's what WordSound's head scout Skiz Fernando found out when he spent a couple of months in Rio. Remember that this is Brazil with an "s," and all types of the country's music are pushed forward. The swinging acoustic guitar on BNegão's "No Hay," Dom Negrone's mix of hip-hop and samba ("O Povo Que Vibra"), Mamelô Sound System riding the Stalag riddim on the dub-hop "Liri Sista," and Digitaldubs' mixture of dancehall and Afro drums on "Arrego" all add up to future visits to the favela from Diplo and friends. *Bruno Natal*

TOM MOULTON: A TOM MOULTON MIX

Soul Jazz/UK/2CD
 From his time in the '60s as a promo man for King Records and a 45 buyer for the Seeburg jukebox company, engineer Tom Moulton knew early on what made a track a hit. It's said that, in the '70s, he literally invented the 12" single, understanding that every last minute of every funk, soul, and disco song was worth dragging out for a prolonged boogie. Collected here are disco hits (Andrea True Connection's classic "More More More") and Motown funk jams (Eddie Kendrick's "Keep on Truckin'") but at extended, glorious lengths (the latter is over 11 minutes long). Grace Jones' extra-slinky cover of Edith Piaf's "La Vie En Rose" is simply beautiful. *Ken Taylor*

SLAM: EKSPOZICIJA 04-STARDOME

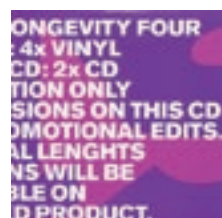
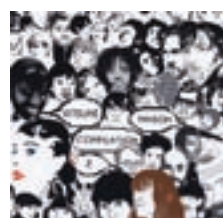
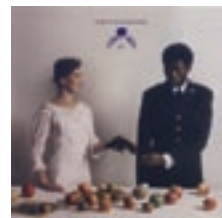
Explicit Musick/SLO/CD
 You don't get to stick around clubland's slippery upper ranks for more than a decade unless you're pretty darn good at conjuring a groove. Stuart MacMillan and Orde Meikle have successfully snaked their way around dancefloors both as Slam and as heads of their strikingly consistent Soma imprint. Their newest mix weaves together longtime faves like Layo & Bushwacka!, Oliver Ho, and Marco Carola in their signature Slam style—deep, lean beats oozing with tech-house phrasing and Detroit grit, with the teensiest hint of (non-cheesy) trance. Warning: may tempt certain folks to reconsider their current dearth of drug use. *Janet Zou*

BEN WATT: BUZZIN' FLY VOLUME III

Buzzin' Fly/UK/CD
 The third volume in Ben Watt's mix series threads together label highlights with a carefully deployed selection of non-Buzzin' Fly tracks (from imprints such as Border Community, Out of Orbit, and I Love Deep) to create a deep house 'n' minimal mix that is beautifully paced and rarely less than lovely. Utilizing the likes of Fairmont's "Gazebo," Kayo's "Clear Sky," and Darkmountaingroup's spectacularly good "Lose Control," as well as Watt's own collaborations with Baby Blak, *Volume III* combines melancholy with a hands-in-the-air style euphoria; navel-gazing with the impulse to get out of it on the dancefloor. Sublime. *David Hemingway*

JOSH WINK: DEEPER SOUNDS VOLUME 3

Thrive/US/2CD
 Josh Wink may not be club music's most famous DJ, but he's got some seriously high-profile remix cred (for folks like NIN and Radiohead)—in fact, it's hard to believe that this is his first ever double-disc mix release. Here, Wink assembles a combination of turntables, computers, CDs, and patience. The two sets, "Subconscious" and "Conscious," reflect the emotional and rhythmic continuity his fans have come to expect, as he presents artists that had a heavy impact on him, from John Tejada to The Orb to Radiohead (his unreleased take on "Everything In Its Right Place" is included here). *Daniel Sivek*

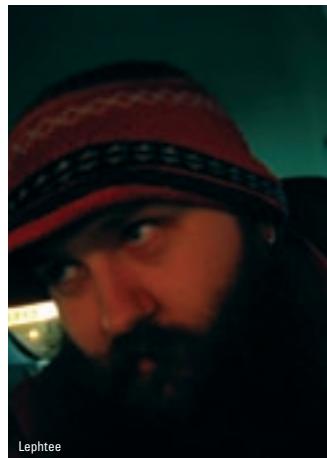


SUR LA MER SAMP-LE-MER

5RC/US/CD
 If Load Records is the Sub Pop of noise, then 5 Rue Christine must be its Dischord. In its nine years as a record label, 5RC has demonstrated a sincere commitment to its varied roster regardless of sales or appeal. The result of this loyalty has produced some incredible releases from the likes of Deerhoof, Xiu Xiu, Hella, and The Mae Shi. *Sur La Mer Samp-Le-Mer*, the label's first compilation, offers 17 tracks (10 of which are previously unreleased) to celebrate their history. Ranging from the abnormal (The Punks' "We Are the Shit, Pt. 2") to the soothing (Amps For Christ's "Old Shepard"), the collection is an aural collage that rarely loses steam. Fans of the label—and its parent, Kill Rock Stars—will gush over the rare jams, while newcomers will revel in the label's many facets, making *Sur La Mer Samp-Le-Mer* required listening for any fan of out-there audio. *Josiah Hughes*



Warm Speakers
by Colin Nagy
HOUSE MUSIC AND ITS EXTENDED VARIATIONS



Lephtee



Jay Haze

While download sites like Beatport, Bleep, and Kompakt's MP3 portal are gaining widespread popularity, it's also worth noting that a crop of emerging net labels are releasing digital-only singles and albums free of charge. As the increasingly influential **Tape** blog (allsexistape.blogspot.com) readily points out, "It's admirable that there are producers out there willing to forego payment in order to get their tunes heard."

One of the more house-leaning imprints, **Corpid** (corpid-label.de), is a strong example of such. Their recent release, **Drei Farben House's** *Fashion* EP, strikes a perfect balance between deep, moody ambient tones and floor-worthy heft on "Wearability," while "Signature Design" is crisp tech-house with chopped, new wave-ish vocals. The label's entire back catalogue is worth a serious troll-through as well.

As for tracks you can still get on wax, **Jay Haze** and **Samim** team up as **Fuckpony**, a counterpunch to the heaping amounts of furrowed-brow, black-turtle-neck minimal tracks saturating Berlin. "Ride the Pony" (Get Physical) is a cheeky slice of bouncy house complete with throwback mainstream-radio-style vocals and pitch-shifted melodies. Be on the lookout for an as-yet-untitled, rumbling, old-school warehouse monster from the duo to be released on the Junion label this summer.

Buzzin' Fly continues a series of strong releases with its first outing from Detroit-based producer **Lephtee**. "So Far Back" is a beautifully optimistic, radiant track with warm keys and shimmering hi-hats, perfect for 6 a.m. on a beach, while the remix by **Phonique** adds a sharper, floor-oriented edge and more sub-bass.

Having recorded for labels like Freude am Tanzen and Sonar Kollektiv, **Soulphiction** offers up "Masai Mara," a beautifully swirling, post-rave, psychedelic house epic on Stuttgart's Philpot Records. This blissful summertime tune is anchored by a stiff, organic-sounding jazz kick drum and a restrained, crisp, marching snare rudiment that serves as a nice contrast to the melody. On a more warped tip, check the b-side to **DJ Yellow's** "Goddess" on Ovum—a plodding, slightly paranoid piece of production that will do well on more left-of-center dancefloors.

Kerri Chandler's *The Fourth Thing for Linda* EP features "All the Downloads," eight minutes of deep, soulful house with warm pads, while on the jazzier tip, **Zumen's** "New Sound" (Raw Fusion) is a slow-paced, crunchy jacker with jazzy vocals. The flip, "Man Do Para," veers into slightly syncopated broken beat territory that would still work well in a 4/4 set to mix things up a bit.

Kirk Degiorgio heads in a decidedly cosmic direction on the *Starwaves* EP (Freerange), with heavily arpeggiated synths and a touch of Italo-disco vibes, while maintaining the depth that characterizes many releases on the imprint. Remixes come from **Jimster**, who tightens up the beat and adds some funk, and **Spiritcatcher**, who goes the peak-time, anthemic route.

For the minimal- and micro-house-minded, don't sleep on the fourth installment of Perlon's stellar *Superlongevity* series, available as a double CD or a quadruple LP. Highlights are "Morning Sir" by **Baby Ford & Zip** and **Luciano's** "Blake Purple Frase." More appearances come from **Dandy Jack and the Third Leg**, **Cabanne**, **Dimbiman**, **Ricardo Villalobos**, and the entire Perlon stable. A must-listen for fans of forward-thinking dance music.



Broken Business
by Peter Nicholson
FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



Baseheadz



Sabrina Malheiros



Hajime Yoshizawa

No cutesy little scene check-ins this time around—ain't got room for that! Too many tunes and not enough time, so without further ado let's head straight into the pile of goodies that has accumulated since we last spoke.

Top of the heap has to be a new stunner from those crafty types at Japan's Especial Recordings, this time bringing you **Hajime Yoshizawa** and a sampler from his forthcoming *Echo From Another Side of the Universe* album. The b has a solid slice of disco-style house from **Kyoto Jazz Massive**, and **Da Lata** do their typically brilliant Brazilian thing on the a2, but it's the lead-off track, "Keep It Movin'," that has the Co-Op kids buzzing, courtesy of **Domu's** huge bruk beat, classy, descending piano chords, and soulful vocals.

On a similarly busted vibe, but with a little rougher feel, comes **Tantan's** *Basement Spiritual* EP from our friends at 4 Lux. **Desha** gets sassy on "Fare You Well (Bitch)" with a big, bass-driven breakdown, and **Dogdaze** brings the percussion pressure to their version of "Mo Music For Hlynur," a minimal track with a wriggly bassline and moody keys.

Also coming from Rotterdam is a new untitled 12" from **Baseheadz** on Mental Recordings. There's some nice downtempo with jazzy kit work and even some delicate drum & bass on the b, but a1 is what I'm feeling. "The Land of the Rising Sun" pairs a crisp, uptempo broken beat with minor-chord keys under heavy compression and reverb to make a solid tune with a spacey, 3 a.m. vibe.

For a bit earlier in the evening you could do worse than turn to a new Far Out release from **Sabrina Malheiros**. With a storming, Brazilian-house monster mix from **Spiritual South** on the

front and a down 'n' dirty broken-bass workout from **Quantic** on the back, this piece o' wax has you covered. Also from the Far Out camp comes #9 in their series of limited 7"s, this one a pair of tracks (one dubby and mysterious, the other acoustic-folk style) from **Custom Blue** with **Mark Pritchard** (a.k.a. **Troubleman**) on the boards.

Looking beyond producers' love affairs with Brazil, head on over to Puerto Rico where the Candela boys are plugging away, this time putting some of Emilio "Millo" Velez's ideas onto wax with the **Local 12's** eponymous EP. "El Cha de Sousa" and "Suavacita" are on the mellow but dramatic tip, à la Cinematic Orchestra, with a swinging mid-tempo feel, but "Alma Latina" kicks up the heels a bit with subdued horns riding a shuffling broken beat.

OK, before the referee blows the final whistle I'm gonna risk a yellow card for hyping a record that isn't brand spanking new: "Porno Futbol" from **Deigo** (in his **Nutmeg** guise) out on Italian label Neroli. With **Vanessa Freeman** holding the mic, you know it's got soul, and Deigo comes through with a hot-and-hollow bassline, sinking keys, and a neck-cracking stomp 'n' go beat. Can't quite see the hooligans chanting it in the stands for the World Cup, but it oughta work on the dancefloor.



Bubble Metropolis
by ML Tronik
TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



Hug



Para One

My life was changed back in 1992 by an unknown techno DJ from the U.K. named **Nad**. A mixtape of his, which was given to me by a college friend, absolutely revolutionized the way I thought about techno. One of the cuts on that mix was **Teste's** "The Wipe" (Plus 8); now, 15 years later, it's been re-released as a remix 12" on Polarized, and it's guaranteed to blast you right back into the annals of classic techno. Go directly to the **Locutus** mix on the b-side and mop up the dance with it.

What's a robot's favorite song? "Light My Wire," perhaps? But what if you're a **Shit Robot**? The two-track EP on the DFA label by the artist of the same name is a distorted, sparsely arpeggiated rhythm ride into mechanized earspace. "Triumph" is the EP's killer: a peak-time thriller, and definitely my track of the month.

Bodycode is the newest offering on Spectral Sound. *The Conservation of Electric Charge* is a collection of stark, decidedly groove-inflected techno. The standout cuts are "I, Data," and "Bounce Back." Also destined to ignite dancefloors near and far is the *Exceeder 12*" by **Mason** (Great Stuff). Think disco-techno with an anthemic synth line that would sound relaxed in between cuts by **M.A.N.D.Y.** and **Marc Romboy**.

Minus continues the minimalist blitz with three new releases, two from **Troy Pierce** and a double-a-sided effort from three dance music legends: **Baby Ford**, **Eon**, and **Mark Pritchard**. Pierce's "25 Bitches" comes in two volumes, including excellent remixes from label mates **Gaiser**, **Berg Nixon**, and **Heartthrob**. The latter, "Link" b/w "Amenity," is one of the more surprising things I've heard from Minus in quite some time. Baby Ford & Eon's "Dead Eye" is the stunner here. It's a deep yet bouncy composition, great for late-night driving.

Justice has returned with the *Waters of Nazareth* EP (Ed Banger). For those who missed it the first time, the EP contains tracks from their promo-only release of the same name, along with remixes, most notably **Erol Alkan's** bombastic re-fix of the title track.

In a similar vein, one of the standout tracks to come my way in the past month belongs to French producer **Para One**. His single "Dudun-dun" (Institutbes/Naive) is a funky meld of squelchy synths, acidic bass, and surprisingly lush melodies. Distinctively French.

John Dahlbäck continues to add to his already impressive collection of releases with a new one under the name **Hug**. The *Platform* EP, on the Kompakt offshoot K2, is a three-track jack journey of peculiar but ultimately very danceable music. The title track is this collection's hottest. Hug it out.

Finally, what would summertime be without the sounds of **Senor Coconut**? His fantastic "Behind the Mask Vols. I & II" (Essay) features a deconstructed-to-fuck remix by **Ricardo Villalobos**. The 10-plus-minute remix sees staccato horn blasts steadily build into a minimal cumbia/techno hybrid. *Me gusta el electro Latino!*



Techno Guest Reviews:
Andy Vaz

Veteran Düsseldorf DJ Andy Vaz kicked off his Background Records label with his first EP, *1-1*, of the *Sound Variation* series back in 2000—and he's never looked back since. Persistence Bit, his next label (which released Vaz's stunning *Live in Detroit* CD last year), also continues to grow, putting out his latest full-length, *Repetitive Moments Last Forever...*, a brilliant exploration into abstract house and techno with flourishes of broken beat and free jazz. He's also working (yes, he's the promo man for his stable of labels, too) the Background Records' compilation, *050*, which commemorates the imprint's fiftieth release with tracks from Terrence Dixon, Rhythm Maker, and Frivolous. In fact, we're a little surprised that Vaz could even find the time to supply us with his latest top three singles. *Ken Taylor*

www.background-records.de

IKEN
"ASPECTS"

Real Soon-Word and Sound/GER/12 + 7
London-based Iken (a.k.a. Paul Hammond of the band Ultramarine) does everything just right. The *Aspects* EP, including the bonus 7", shows his deep appreciation for sexy analog house, without any trendy gimmicks or unnecessary ballast. Concentrating on a simple but highly effective groove, and rhythms that stay minimal and repetitive, he adds to the never-ending depth that is always the centerpiece of his music. An excellent release at a time when an abundance of technically over-produced and samey music seems to be floating around. Highly recommended. *Andy Vaz*

JAMES DIN A4
"BÜRO FÜR BERUFSSKUNDE"

Esel/GER/12
James Din is by far Germany's most underrated producer, and he never plays by the rules of the music business. On his Esel label, he has passionately released countless minimal techno EPs: limited-to-300 pressings, handmade self-designed sleeves, often on colored vinyl. This new 12" features warm-sounding, melodic, Detroit-influenced downtempo tracks, switching between melancholic and optimistic, sometimes strange or humorous, yet always giving harmony priority over either linear 4/4 or crackly rhythmic patterns. Unique and full of rich personal ideas, this EP is recommended. *Andy Vaz*

T.O.M. PROJECT
"RENAISSANCE"

Sound Signature/US/12
Theo Parrish, Omar Smith, and Marcellus Pittman team up for Sound Signature's T.O.M. side project, a limited, one-sided piece of blue vinyl with only one track—a radically old-school acid house anthem. Basic to the bone, but even more effective in its authenticity, when played at the right time this one is guaranteed to save the night. A punchy kick drum, a strong acid line, and orchestral-sounding chords float together, and you can hear how it must have been a fun live jam session for the trio. *Andy Vaz*



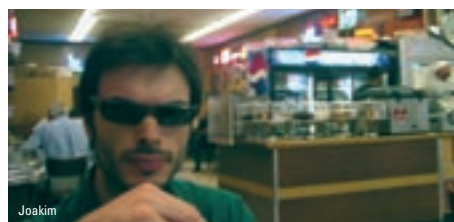
Apocalypse Wow
by Roy Dank
TRAVERSING TIME AND SPACE IN SEARCH OF
ODDBALL DANCE AND POST-PUNK GOODIES



Escort (photo by Chris Gwyn)



Mungolian Jet Set



Joakim

Just when you thought you had this whole nu-disco, punk-funk, whatchamacallit figured out, along comes a fresh crop of new artists to throw a wrench into your spokes. **Mungolian Jet Set** takes the cake for wackiest name in the game, and their recent overhauls of new Output signing **Kreeps** ("All I Wanna Do Is Break Some Hearts") and fellow Norwegian **Lindström** ("A Blast Of Loser"), respectively, certainly live up to it.

New York's **Escort** has been making serious waves the world over with their unadulterated take on '80s R&B and disco. "Starlight" kicked off their eponymous label last month, and boasted a tasty mix from **Metro Area**'s Darshan Jesrani to boot. Elsewhere in the city, Swiss ex-pats **In Flagranti** have been fine-tuning the live show and gearing up for their full-length debut, but still found it in their hearts to drop one helluva EP for the Gomma label. Out in September, *In The Silver White Box* may well be their best work to date.

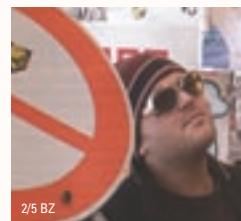
Speaking of hitting their stride, **Matt Edwards** (a.k.a. **Radio Slave**, **Rekid**, and one half of the mighty **Quiet Village Project**) is on a serious roll at the moment. In the past few months alone, the man's dropped the Rekid full-length *Made In Menorca* on Soul Jazz, launched his very own Rekids imprint, and, with Quiet Village partner Joel Martin, has both remixed **Cosmo Vitelli**'s forthcoming "Delay" in fine cosmic fashion, and readied yet another 12" ("Circus of Horrors") for the shadowy Whatever We Want camp.

Whatever We Want ups the ante and then some with a shitload of offerings in the months to come, including firsts from **Godsy** ("Nectar of Rubies"), **Razor Against Silk** ("My Friend...He Loves"), and **Wounded Tricks** ("Widows Weeds"). Disco doyen **Harvey** teams up with **Rub N Tug's Thomas Bullock** for another **Map of Africa** single ("Gonna Ride") in anticipation of the monster long-player. Tom's at it on the edits again, too, both on the solo tip as **Otterman Empire** ("Babylon and On") and with Rub N Tug partner **Eric Duncan**. The twisted twosome takes on an '88 remix of Belgian new wavers **Minimal Compact's** "Nil Nil" for the Tigersushi imprint. To make matters even more perplexing, their edit forms the b-side of the long-awaited **Joakim & Morpheus** cut "Give Us Something."

The New York-France connection continues with more reissues from Ze Records, who complete the colossal task of re-releasing every single one of **Lizzy Mercier Descloux's** many albums. Acute returns in fine form this summer with the complete works of New York no-wave heroes **Ike Yard**, including a number of previously unreleased cuts and killer liner notes from member **Stuart Argabright** (also of **Dominatrix** and **Death Comet Crew** fame). Last, but certainly not least, come the ladies of **ESG**, who drop *Keep on Moving*, the second full-length since the group reformed in the late '90s. It's as raw and spunky as ever—all the more amazing considering how long the Scroggins sisters have been at it. You go girls!



Basic Needs
by Kid Kameleon
LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP
AND BEYOND



2/5 BZ



Umwelt



JuaKali

Living in the Bay Area, it's been a little hard in recent months to concentrate on music for this column. Every time I take a stack of CDs to the car and turn on the radio, KMEL (Oakland's hip-hop station) is so freakin' good—with new tunes from **E-40**, **Keak Da Sneak**, **Mistah F.A.B.**, and a slew of youngsters—that I can't bear to turn it off. Call it hometown pride I guess... all I can do is hope producers reading this, especially the dubsteppers, pick up on the Yay Area sound for collabs. **Skream vs. E-A-Ski**? That would be off the chain!

While that particular pairing remains a dream, there are a lot of tracks smashing things here and now. Big discovery is the white label about to be released from Dub War MC **JuaKali** with banging remixes from around the world: **RXM's** mix of "2Finga" is an uptempo slammer liberally revisiting the ORCH5 hit and **Kush Arora's** mix does it up in his trademark bhang-ragga style. The flip, "Until Then," gets **Drop the Lime's** best attention and **Alpha and Omega** round it out with heavy dub work. Foreignfamiliar.com is where to pick it up.

Also worth tracking down: **DJ Panzah Zandahz** brilliantly applied his genius on the limited-edition "Radiohead Beats and Breaks" (Token Recluse) 12", which eventually got turned into the mash-up album *Me and This Army*. Now Panzah puts **Beck** is on the chopping block, and it works just as well because, hey, that's what Beck was doing in the first place. Club-friendly drum loops and samples from "Jackass," "Devil's Haircut," all of *Midnite Vultures*, and many others appear here—a perfect balance between the new and familiar, and a guaranteed party smasher every time. Apparently **Bjork's** next...

If the East/West sonic amalgams of **Maga Bo** and **Mutamassik** are up your alley, check **2/5 BZ** (a.k.a. Serhat Koksal) from Istanbul, whose "Militant Oriental"/"Peel Session II" six-track EP is a crazy fusion of Turkish pop, raggas-sonics, electro, and much more thrown together five layers at a time. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the Pnuma label has released the ultra-clean and super-funky *Shockwave Rider* EP from **Scape One**—one for those of us who came to electro and techno via Warp's *Artificial Intelligence* series and then discovered Drexiciya. Also on the electro tip, Satamile, located out here in S.F. (check the Tuesday weekly Bot party at BOCA), has been turning out wicked stuff all spring. A great full album from **Umwelt** and an elastic EP from **Lowfish** shook up the early summer; now SATRX5 is on the way (**Bytecon** remixed by **30hz** and **DJ Quest**) and it sounds like a beast!

Two final shouts: If you missed any of the great singles from Planet Mu (they sometimes take a while to filter over to the US), look out for the **Shitmat/Chevron/Mu-Ziq** take on "Gary's Gruesome Garage," awesome EPs from **M.R.K.1** (both solo and with **Virus Syndicate**), and **Distance's** "Traffic"/"Cyclops" 12. And bringing it all home, Bay Area vet **Kid 606** does right by the B-more, electro, and *baile* sounds with *Pretty Girls Make Raves*, his best EP in quite a while. **San Quinn vs. 606**, how cool would that be? California dreamin'...



PAPALOTE
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The Debut Album
FEATURING THE GARDEN & STORM WITH EDAN & MR. LIF

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URB Magazine

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**Downbeat
Diaspora
by Rico
"Superbizzee"
Washington**

GETTING YOU UP ON THE SHARPEST SOUL, FUNK, AND R&B



Tiombe Lockhart (photo by Dustin Ross)



The Broken Keys

What's good, ladies and gents? I just got in from **DJ Spinna & Bobbito's** annual Wonder-Full celebration, and boy, are my feet tired! All who attended should have holes in their soles from gettin' on the good foot for eight hours straight! But in the company of good vibes and good tunes, it's an easy feat! Besides, doin' the bump with **India.Arie** on the dancefloor didn't hurt the experience either.

By the way, Spinna & Bob also hit all of us in boogie Wonderland with a new cut by **Omar** called "Feeling You" (Ether), featuring **Stevie Wonder** himself! If you don't know, now you know. Speaking of Spinna, keep an eye out for a brand spankin' new full-length from the man this summer. The cut "Back 2 U" (Shanachie) featuring **Selan** should whet your appetite until then.

Meanwhile, back at the ranch...word has it that soul man extraordinaire **John Legend** has been quite busy in the studio. In addition to putting the finishing touches on his sophomore album with producer **Raphael Saadiq**, he's also been clocking hours at label mates **Sa-Ra's** Cosmic Dust Recorders studio, laying vocals for their debut long-player for **Kanye West's** G.O.O.D. Music imprint.

Also in the studio is **Platinum Pied Pipers'** resident chanteuse **Tiombe Lockhart**. Some of the new shit I've heard from her forthcoming solo debut is damn near otherworldly! A bangin' 12" slab is coming soon... Don't sleep!

Get your ringside seats, folks! BBE Records presents the heavyweight dusty grooves championship of the year! Globetrotting crate diggers **Kon & Amir** go head to head with Japan's finest, **DJ Muro**, on the double-disc *The Kings Of Diggin'*. With 61 tracks in all, this bout is not one to miss!

Under the auspices of **The Broken Keys**, producers **Nostalgia 77** and **Natural Self** team up on the Tru-Thoughts 7" "Slingshot (pts. 1 & 2)." All you funky backsliders who fancy car-chase scenes with a hellafied groove should dig this one. Also straight outta the UK, the **Steady Diggin' Workshop** has issued the ultimate pimp strut 7", "Dippin' Biscuits" (Carbon Imprints). If you haven't caught wind of these fel-las, it will take all of two minutes and two seconds for you to become a believer.

Yo, stop the presses... We got some breaking news! After making all us acid jazz junkies suffer with our joneses for so long, soul siren **N'Dea Davenport** and the original **Brand New Heavies** are back together again! Facilitating this funky Voltron is none other than their original label, Delicious Vinyl! Folks, if listening to new cuts like the soulful "Right On" don't get you to reminiscing on 1991, then nothing will.

If **J Rawls'** "Bailar" was on your top 10 list of 2005 bangers and you dug **Aloe Blacc's** collabos with **Exile** and **Oh-No**, cop Aloe's new single, "Dance For Life" b/w "Patria Mia" (Stones Throw). This cat's long awaited debut album, *Shine Through*, is chock fulla of goodies, like the **Madlib**-produced "One Inna" and the salsa-flavored version of John Legend's "Ordinary People" (Spanish-English translation not included). Okay, folks, that's my five minutes of funk! Until we meet again, stay light on your feet and keep clappin' and snappin' on the downbeat! Don't let the soul patrol catch your record skippin'!



**After Silence
by Martin de Leon II**

THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Amps For Christ



Sound Team

Rock music makes me sleepy. Not in the same way watching Japanese TV does, or watching German DJs **Modeselektor** turn entire rooms into robots in New York. I mean sleepy, as in poor grad students who sleep all day. And, like them, I've learned some things: Duos are the new bands and crayon beats are the new indie rock.

Portland's Audraglint label has been releasing great music for five years. With *Silverware*, they commemorate a half-decade with 73 minutes of unreleased gems from luminaries such as **Kid 606**, youngsters **Grizzly Bear**, and glossy beat-smith **Caural**. Twenty excellent tracks for those four-person dance parties at home.

And if you like to dance to Merzbow, perhaps California one-man project **Amps for Christ's** *Every Eleven Seconds* (5RC) is up your dark alley. Guitar whiz kid Barnes uses various pedals and effects to make syrupy noise tracks ("Augmented/Demented") and weirdly balances them with folk ("Sweet Dove") and fuzzy spoken-word samples ("Chorus").

Yip-Yip uses beats like crayons. The Florida duo is like an electronic **Lightning Bolt** (with whom they've shared the stage) on their upcoming album *In The Reptile House* (SAF). Check "Candy Dinner" for some cheery Depeche Mode beats set atop spazz tempos.

Austin indie rockers **Sound Team** are just what hot days necessitate: dreamy songs. The sextet released a great EP called *Work* (Big Orange) that shows their depth, with pretty melodies to boot.

Pianos normally mean seriousness and London's **Devastations** are no exception. Like a soundtrack to tomorrow's funeral or a folk-rock Joy Division, their self-titled debut album made **Karen O** yelp in pleasure. And you should be giddy for these Britons, too, whose new album *Coal* (Brassland) is both wide-eyed and melancholic. But two Brooklyn bands may make

you want to stay on this side of the pond. **Stars Like Fleas'** upcoming album *The Ken Burns Effect* (Praemedia) features rotating members who almost never play live. But they do turn pretty acoustic songs and cut-up monologues into some kind of loony-bin rock. **Dragons of Zynth**, a Cleveland-born duo whose upcoming as-yet-untitled debut is produced by **TV on the Radio's** **David Sitek** and **Kyp Malone**, is also bonkers. Their hazy rock and synthesizer soul, coupled with brilliant shows in New York, is just what these war-torn summer days should sound like.

Further evidence that duos are in comes from Austin's **Chico y Chico**, a twosome that slings psychedelic beats and nonconformist rock. Dancing to neon drum machines and distorted vocals on their album *Thunderwear* (Black Wainbow), I put on my *Star Trek* glasses and shake a leg.

The trio **Parts & Labor** is like a white **Boredoms**, but more formless and electronic. Their album *Stay Afraid* (Jagjaguwar) elbows you with grumpy synthesizers, thunderous drums, and hands-over-ears noise. Dreamy stuff—if you're Matthew Barney.

Listening to rock music in art galleries is normally like staring at Rothko paintings for hours and hours with your mom. But New York's **Apeshit!** went nuts at the Whitney last month and scared *Village Voice* reporters into questioning loud rock. This noise-punk quartet is what Swedish band **Refused** probably would sound like now—if, you know, they still existed. Look for an album very soon.

Noisy rock, straight-up bananas rap beats, and fuzzy lyrics rumble my iPod. I'm not so sleepy anymore.



**Read The Label
by Jesse "Drosco"
Serwer**

HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



CL Smooth



M. Sayyid

It's been a rough year for Detroit hip-hop: first **J Dilla** passed in February, then **Proof**, mentor to Eminem and one of the city's most respected MCs, was killed in an apparent double homicide. The city remains a hotbed of MC activity, however, even if there isn't a hyphy-like movement going on. Witness *Dirty District Vol. 3* (Barak) from producer **Young RJ**, one half of **BR Gunna** (the production duo behind most of **Slum Village's** recent output). While not all the MCs here are from Detroit, it's locals **Black Milk**, **Frank N Dank**, and **Phat Kat** who hit the hardest. Unknown MC **Lo Louis**, meanwhile, provides the most entertaining cut with "Yo Mother's Body," a hilarious ode to saucy MILFs.

Fresh off their hyper *Heavy Meckle* mixtape, **Team Shadetek's** "Brooklyn Anthem" (SOUND-iNK 12") is a genre-bending twist through grime, dancehall, and hip-hop. While the massive a-side features rude bwoys **77 Klash** and **Jah Dan**, the b-sides spotlight New York MCs **Rustee Juxx** and **Zesto** on "BK Assassin," a glitchy grime track matched with Juxx's gun-clapping rhymes, and "Make It," a quick jolt of hyped-up, Just Blaze-style horns, respectively.

With his **Airborn Audio** partner **High Priest** about to release an LP on SOUND-iNK, **M. Sayyid** has dropped *Twilight Zone*, a street tape mixed by DJ **Raedawn** (a.k.a. **Crunc Tesla**). Half quirky self-productions and half freestyles over familiar beats, Sayyid proves that his spattering, start-stop rhyme style is enough to hold down a mixtape without guest appearances.

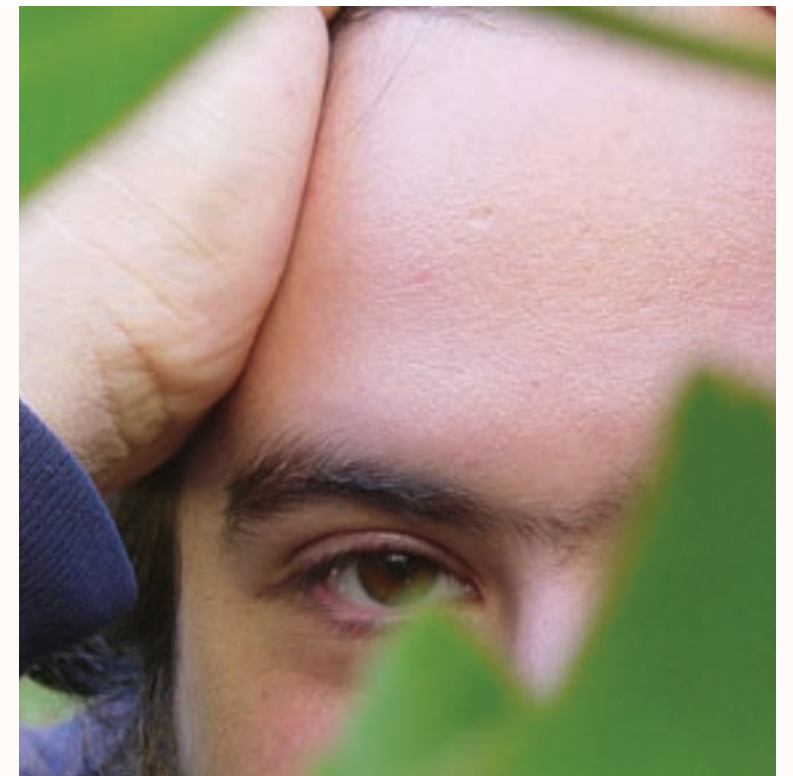
Coming on the heels of their *We Got It 4 Cheap* mixtapes, **Clipse's** "Mr. Me Too" (Re-Up/Star Trak) might be one of the year's most anticipated official 12"s (thanks in part to their strange new indie rock fanbase). While I could do without the **Pharrell** rhymes—dude is so annoying at this point—this sizzurp-slow pseudo-sequel to the classic "Grindin'" could be the joint that gets them back on the mainstream radar.

If you're like me, you probably assumed **CL Smooth** without **Pete Rock** would be like Lamont selling junk without Fred (word to Whitman Mayo). But firmly on the comeback trail after a decade-long absence, the Mecca Don is coming with heat. *Man On Fire: The Freestyle Sessions*, with mixtape DJ **J. Period**, features 21 tracks of tongue lashings and boasts (over very well-chosen beats like **The Pharcyde's** "Runnin'" and **Scarface's** "Guess Who's Back"), while his "American Me" b/w "Smoke In The Air" 12" (Shaman Work) is equally strong. Expect his upcoming *American Me* LP to be one of the year's best lyrical exercises.

On his *Back To The Beat* mixtape, producer/journalist **Nomadic Trackz** has boldly attempted to rework some of hip-hop's all-time classics, from "The Message" to the **JVC Force's** "Strong Island." While most of these songs are incapable of being improved upon, Nomadic's laid-back versions shed a different light on high-energy tracks like "Public Enemy No. 1" and **MC Lyte's** "Paper Thin."

I really like **Papoose** but I don't get why he hasn't hooked up with a Premier or Alchemist. The Brooklyn MC finally gets with a marquee producer on "Get Right" featuring **Busta Rhymes** (Streetsweepers/Flipmode); the only problem is that it's **Swizz Beats**, who regurgitates his own "Touch It" drums. Winning b-side "Faces of Death," a hood/rap equivalent of the snuff-film series, feels like the second coming of **Big L**.

Speaking of Harlem, free Black Rob! Seriously one of the most underrated. For more info, check www.freeblackrob.com.



**Hip-Hop Guest Reviews:
Ammoncontact**

Los Angeles-based producers Ammoncontact (the team of Carlos Niño and Fabian Ammon Allston) make "fusion" a good word. Their markedly tasteful penchant for taking only the best of hip-hop, jazz, funk, and R&B sounds and weaving them into monumental instrumental creations remains their legacy. On their latest disc, *With Voices* (Ninja Tune), Yusef Lateef, Dwight Trible, and Prince Po (who all appear on the brilliant "Beautiful Flowers") are among the many folks that add their unique musical approaches. But Ammoncontact is hardly the only game in town for this duo. Niño is constantly on the boards, producing new records for The Life Force Trio, Hu Vibrational, and Build An Ark in the coming months. He also helms L.A.'s airwaves each Friday from 8 'til 10 on KPFK 90.7 FM. Here's what's been making the rounds on his show, Spaceways Radio, lately. *Aaron Ashley*
www.ammoncontact.com, www.spacewaysradio.com

**DABRYE
"IN WATER" (FROM TWO/THREE INSTRUMENTALS)**

Ghostly International/US/CD
"In Water" is the standout of both the new vocal and instrumental releases from Ann Arbor's Dabrye. Where I clearly understand the progression from instrumental work to focused collaboration with vocalists, Dabrye is at his best when his lush, microtonal, heavily swingin' bass-driven beats are speaking. I've always been a fan of his sound and have recently driven around L.A. a few times with "In Water" on repeat. *Carlos Niño*

**DNTL
"UNTITLED" (FROM EARLY WORKS FOR ME IF IT WORKS FOR YOU II)**

Phthalo/US/CD-R
Though not well known as a beat maker, the acclaimed L.A.-based producer of The Postal Service and resident DJ on dublab.com is one of the most provocative and understated forces in hip-hop. Track 6 (as of now untitled, promised to remain track 6) from his latest offering to the most experimental and independent of labels is one of the most incredible dissolving drone/distortion keyboard impressions I've ever heard. *Carlos Niño*

**FLYING LOTUS
"1983" (FROM 1983)**

Plug Research/US/CD
Nephew of musical goddess Alice Coltrane and employee of Stones Throw Records, Flying Lotus, a 21-year-old hip-hop eccentric, is continuing the legacy of the great J Dilla while paying close attention to the incredible lineage he was blessed to be born into. "1983" is dynamic and expansive with sharp edges and tender curves, electronic waves and analog bliss. *Carlos Niño*



Lucky 13
by Toph One

TophOne's mix CD *Live Loud & Dirty* is available at www.fabric8.com/redwine. Hear him every Wednesday at the RedWine Social at Dalva in SF.



Couch



Hydroponic Sound System



E.Moss

Odd thoughts float to the surface as one pedals a bicycle from San Francisco to Los Angeles in the heat and fog of June. From the stinking artichoke fields outside of Salinas over the lavender Coast Range and down through the dusty ranchlands of Central California, there's not a whole lot else to do besides listen to your muscles creak and ponder the twisted, sadistic drive of those missionary padres heading north into the Unknown many moons ago. It's a strange place to find a big-city wino, to be sure, but I pride myself on life's little anomalies—like shedding your Ben Davis for a nude plunge into the Pacific at Baker Beach, or French-kissing transvestite nuns to celebrate Easter Sunday in the Castro. These are the things that make life worth living, things that might elicit a faint “fuck yeah!” from Henry Miller's grave.

1) RICO PABON “LOUDER THAN FICTION”

Hard Knock/US/12

The first single from this former front man for Prophets of Rage, “Lay ‘Em Down” should be booming everywhere from the Bronx to San Jose, and from West L.A. to San Juan. Strong Latin melodies and guest vocals from Sticman of Dead Prez make this my summer joint of the year.

2) SMOKE & KTW “SHAKE IT LIKE A CHICKEN”

white/US/12

More delicious backyard funk from sun-drenched Pasadena; this jammy will spice up any BBQ and keep the neighbors up for hours, low-down style. Put the Tecates on ice, fellas. I'm on my way!

3) HYDROPONIC SOUND SYSTEM UPTOWN SHAKEDOWN EP

Bastard Jazz/US/12EP

Two of my favorite purveyors of jazzy hotness, Texas' Hydroponic lay out the beats on Brooklyn's Bastard Jazz label and the result is just stupid amounts of ass-shaking and general good times.

4) IN FLAGRANTI “GENITAL BLUE ROOM”

Codek/US/12EP

It wasn't so very long ago that I'd drop a Velvet Underground song in the middle of a packed dancefloor and happily watch the ensuing confusion. Then money and fame took over and people wanted “beat-matching” and I lost all that fun chaos. Well fuck it—I'm gonna go get “Codek” tattooed on my calf and spin “Subvariety” tonight.

5) COUCH FIGUR 5

Morr Music/GER/CD

ISAN PLANS DRAWN IN PENCIL Morr Music/GER/CD Speaking of deconstructing dancefloors, if I'm not road-tripping across the Midwest this August with the shimmering sounds of Couch sweating out of my pores, then I will have failed in my quest to find the “New Pastoral Sound.”

6) E.MOSS BEATBOXES AT DAWN

Consumers/US/12EP

Back at the party, we find Backyard Bangers/Mo'Wax producer E.Moss busy crafting instrumental hip-hop cut-ups for the gallery (“Chopin Beats & Droppin Brahms”) and the disco (“Imperius Rex”). But the true gem here is the monumental “Back to the Edit,” on a par with anything by DJ Shadow or Luke Vibert.

7) RAH MUZIC & AL KEYS FEATURING KILLA KLUMP AND STYLES-P “GO HARD”

RahMuzic/US/12

Next time I head down to Jackson Arms for target practice in South San Francisco, I'm rolling with Killa Klump and Styles-P on the box. And I *still* won't be the hardest pistol-packing motherfucker riding a bike on Bayshore!

8) AFRODISIAC SOUNDSYSTEM 2006 SAMPLER

demo/US/CD

With a growing popularity from their *AfroHeat* series of bootleg

remix EPs, A.S.S. (a.k.a. DJs Haul, Mason, and Jed from L.A.) are finishing up their full-length of original material featuring vocals by Aloe Blacc and Raashan Ahmad, and it is blazing hot, kid.

9) ALOE BLACC “DANCE FOR LIFE”

Stones Throw/US/12

When you're hot, you're hot, and methinks we'll be hearing from Aloe Blacc for a long time to come. With this latest single from his solo debut *Shine Through*, fans of Vikter Duplaix and Bugz in the Attic will be driven to a carnival frenzy. Brilliant.

10) PSEUDO SLANG “BROKE & COPASETIC”

Fat Beats/US/12

A lovely debut featuring Vinya Mojica, but I'm banging the bass-driven “Yes Doubt.” Whoa-EE!

11) VINYL FOGSHACK MUSIC VOL.1

In The Pocket/US/LP

This S.F. groove-funk band has been around for years, but it's been a while since I've heard the uptempo jazz breaks of “Give and Go” or the Lee Perry-style dub of “Clickety Clack.” Thank guests Bernie Worrell and the Rondo Brothers for that.

12) VARIOUS REWORKED 4

white/US/12EP

Presto steals the show with a sultry remix of “Sometimes” by the Brand New Heavies, but King Most also rocks the house with his Latin take on Jurassic 5's “High Fidelity.”

LUCKY 13) DESIGN ANARCHY

Adbusters/CAN/book

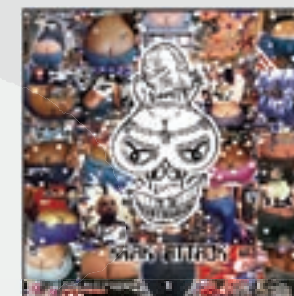
Like a biblio-visual kick in the balls, the good folks at *Adbusters* have compiled a wake-up call to jar the complacent masses to attention. As with Hakim Bey or a good Clash song, you'll feel inspired to throw a little monkey wrench into the works yourself, and make old Ed Abbey proud.

MORE HEAT FROM SOUND-INK IN STORES & DROPPING SOON:

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TEAM SHADETEK - PALE FIRE - 9.12.06
HIGH PRIEST - BORN IDENTITY - 10.24.06

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XLR8R incite

Photo by Christopher Woodcock (www.cwphotography.com)



Mouse on Mars: Andi Toma (left) and Jan St. Werner



**IN THE STUDIO:
MOUSE
ON MARS**

The co-mastermind of Mouse on Mars and the man behind Lithops chats about thrift store pleasures and retro-futurism.

WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD
PHOTO: ROSA BARBA

Jan St. Werner makes electronic music so abstract and overloaded with ideas that it seems “post-everything.” In his solo work as Lithops and in collaboration with Andi Toma as Mouse on Mars, he is best known for translating postmodern concepts, dance rhythms, ambient excursions, and digital tomfoolery into music that sounds like child’s play, as if the sounds are being thrown against walls to see if they break. Their brand of mutant techno can be heard in the mind-altering streaks on Mouse on Mars’ upcoming album, *Varcharz*, and the new Lithops record, *Mound Magnetic*, which St. Werner describes as “retro-futuristic, electro-acoustic, speed-improv” music. Along with his musical projects, St. Werner is the artistic director of Amsterdam’s Steim Institute, where electronic instruments and programs are researched and built.

Mouse on Mars’ *Varcharz* will be released on Ipecac in September. Lithops’ *Queries* is out now on Sonig, and *Mound Magnetic* will be released on Thrill Jockey later this fall. www.mouseonmars.com

WHAT SOFTWARE PROGRAMS DOES MOUSE ON MARS TYPICALLY USE?

We use what everyone is using these days, which is a bit of Logic and then some Native [Instruments] packages. Native is a company we’ve worked with for a long time and we have a good relationship with them so they usually give us the latest tools or something that has not been fully finished yet. We try all of their gear.

WHAT ABOUT ANALOG GEAR?

There are a couple of MXR [analog delays] that we like. We have a lot of flangers, pedals, and a lot of Electro-Harmonix stuff and ring modulators, of course. We have compressors and EQs like DBX [120A Subharmonic Synthesizer], which [acts] like an extra bass and is a reason to add sub-bass to a bass drum, or even a synth or a bass guitar. And then we have fantastic tools like a Massenburg—an equalizer and a compressor. If you have that you don’t need much more.

WHAT TYPE OF MICROPHONES DO YOU FAVOR?

Neumann U87, AKG C414, Shure, Sennheiser... We really love microphones. Andi is a microphone fanatic. He mics up everything. We bought some Radio Shack surface microphones—they have a flat, metal plate with a contact mic [inside that] detects

the audio from a surface. It’s really good to mic up the drums to give them a spatial edge. Usually when we’re on tour in the US, in thrift stores we find some weird, old microphones. The weirdest is when you find a really good tool for cheap like a [Roland TB-] 303 for \$30, and that’s what happened to us in France. Or like an Electro-Harmonix Doctor Q [pedal] we found for \$50 in the US.

DO YOU USE NEW STUDIO TECHNIQUES OR INSTRUMENTS ON THE NEW MOUSE ON MARS RECORD?

No. It’s more like the procedure of recording sounds, playing them, having some bits played like guitar and bass, and then editing them again, cutting them into pieces, and putting it all together again so it sounds like a band, but a virtual band. We did it with a rock attitude for the first time. It’s not because we wanted to sound like a rock band, but it [was inspired by] those live concerts as a trio and as a duo. We wanted to have a much more immediate, direct energy... But then of course, everything would be reconstructed again and reedited. It’s always this play with what is real or what is life, or what is a band or what is a studio thing, or what is electronic music or acoustic music. I think [it’s] these stereotypes that challenge us to twist things.

CAN THE IDEAS AND MATERIAL THAT YOU AND ANDI CREATE IN THE STUDIO BECOME OVERWHELMING AT TIMES?

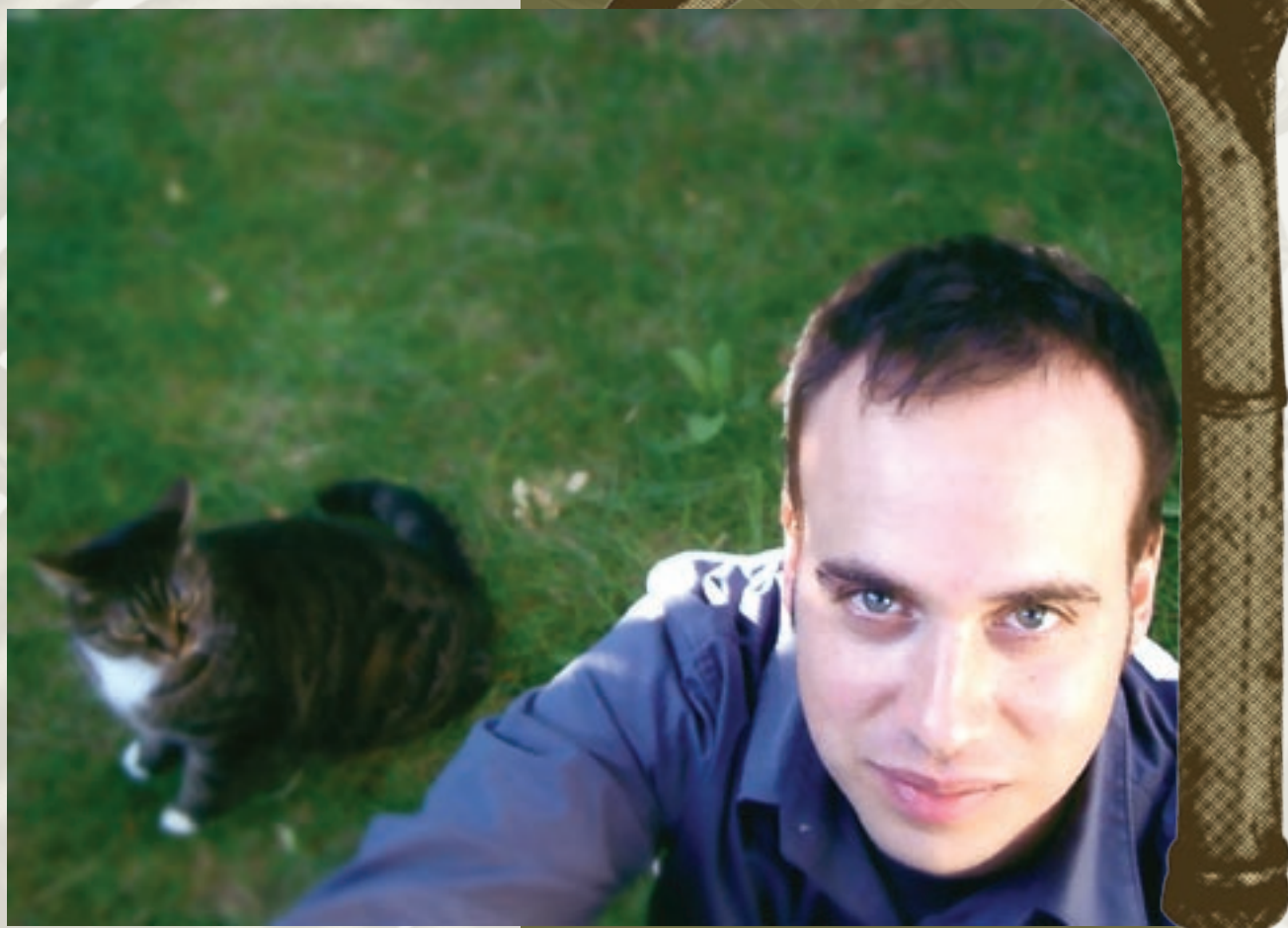
It is overwhelming all the time; that’s what we look for. It’s like when people try to climb an even higher mountain or reach ground where no one has been before. We always find challenges that we haven’t had before, and that’s why we basically do it. We’re like this extreme team or something.

FOR THE FUTURE, WHAT ARE SOME IDEAS THAT YOU AND ANDI ARE PLAYING WITH?

I think that the next thing we want to do is a real dancefloor album with a noisy side that brings a certain metallic-funk noise attitude into the clubs. We are quite far in this project and it’s something that you should expect for early next year, which is a real change for Mouse on Mars [laughs]. For us, it’s the most important thing to always come up with a change that is a surprise and hits you in the back of your head.



In Mouse on Mars’ studio. (top row) Native Instruments Traktor, Electro-Harmonix Doctor Q, (bottom row) Logic Pro 7, Native Instruments Reaktor, Neuman U87 mic, and AKG C414 mic



ARTIST TIPS: SOLVENT



1



2



3



4

As Solvent, Toronto producer Jason Amm takes electro-pop to invigorating new levels. In his studio, the sounds of grade-school science class films morph into anthems for the digital age, tracks that look forward while always keeping a keen eye on the past—the '70s and '80s, specifically. Amm's records for labels like Ghostly International and his own Suction Records—which he runs with friend and fellow producer Gregory DeRocher (a.k.a. Lowfish)—helped put synth-pop back on the musical map in the late '90s. Now, as Black Turtleneck (his project with Thomas Sinclair), Amm is ready to put the Human League and early Depeche Mode styles on our collective iPods. Their debut full-length, *Musical Chairs* (Nrmls Wlcm), brings a host of new wave vocals (courtesy of Sinclair) into the fray, but it's the old-wave synths that still rule the roost. Here Amm provides us with a look into his collection of keyboards. *Ken Taylor*
www.solventcity.com, www.blackturtleneck.ca

1. MOOG VOYAGER
My newest synth. Some analog snobs tend to brush it off: "It's no MiniMoog," they say. Perhaps it isn't quite as confident and rude as the original, but my studio is already full of cranky old beasts, so the Voyager sounds refreshingly smooth and creamy to my ears. *Mmmmm*, Moog filters. *Solvent*

2. KORG MS-20
The dual resonant filters are the magic behind the MS-20, but don't forget to try running a drum machine through the pitch-to-CV converter for some truly mental acid business. The MS-20 is perfect for programming monsters, insects, and tinfoil teakettles. It also does a lovely flute. Most of my drum sounds are made on the MS-20. *Solvent*

3. ROLAND V-SYNTH
I'm known to be pretty anti-digital, but the V-Synth is actually the first synth I've used in ages that has given me new ideas for synthesis and sound manipulation. I've been using the Vocal Card live as my main vocoder, and can't wait to use some of the vocal modeling algorithms on my upcoming material. *Solvent*

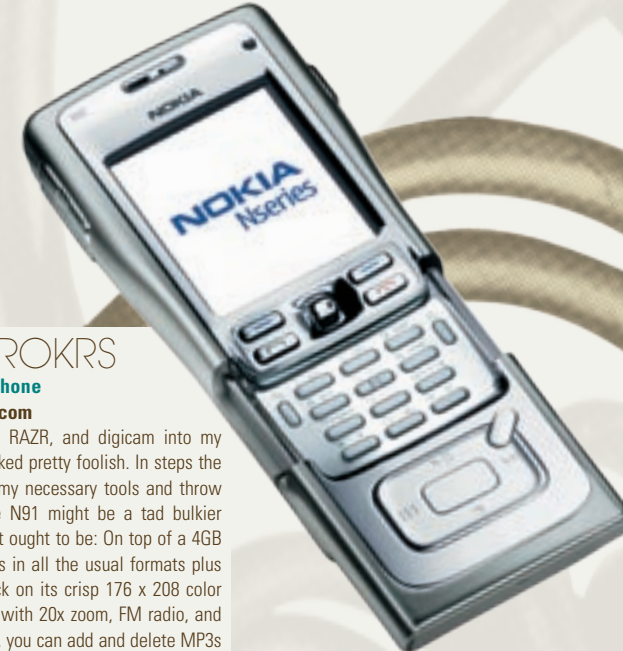
4. ROLAND JUPITER 6
My first analog synth, bought over 15 years ago, which still never fails to impress me. It's definitely not one of those "turn-some-knobs-and-everything-sounds-great" synths, but once you know how to really program it, the surprises keep coming. There is hardly a Solvent recording that isn't dominated by the JP-6. *Solvent*

MODS VS. ROKRS

Nokia N91 Multimedia Phone

MSRP: \$650; www.nokia.com

I've tried stuffing my iPod, RAZR, and digicam into my pocket all at once, and I looked pretty foolish. In steps the **Nokia N91** to consolidate my necessary tools and throw a bit of style my way. The N91 might be a tad bulkier than most cell phones, but it ought to be: On top of a 4GB hard drive (up to 3000 songs in all the usual formats plus video recording and playback on its crisp 176 x 208 color screen), it's got a 2MP cam with 20x zoom, FM radio, and web browsing. What's more, you can add and delete MP3s without having to use iTunes or any other type of media management software via USB or Bluetooth connectivity. Add in the extras—a dock as sleek as the phone's chrome design itself, a pair of ear buds, and compact Sennheiser headphones for seamless switching between calls and music—and you've got the most versatile phone on the market today. *Ken Taylor*



IF YOU'RE SICK OF SEQUENCING ON THE COMPUTER, THE SEQUENTIX P3 IS A 16-STEP REVELATION.

THE 16-STEP PROGRAM

Sequentix P3 Sequencer

MSRP: \$1000; www.sequentix.com

If you're sick of sequencing on the computer, the **Sequentix P3** is a 16-step revelation. Featuring eight tracks of simultaneous MIDI sequencing, four MIDI outs, and myriad knobs and keys, the P3 is programmed like a TR-808 or 909—except it's capable of doing 10 times as much. By cycling through parameter modes, knobs can adjust usual suspects like velocity and pitch, but also atypical additions like timing delays (excellent for drum rolls or swing). For live use, easy change-ups (by way of step skips and randomization functions) mean you can actually *play* live, rather than pretend. While the P3 may be a retro concept at heart, it's also one of the most innovative sequencers to come out in years. *Brandon Ivers*



NOW THAT IT'S ARRIVED, EXACTLY HOW MUCH HEAT DOES IT PACK?



KORE DYNAMICS

Native Instruments KORE Universal Sound Platform

MSRP: \$559; www.native-instruments.com

Over the past several months, Native Instruments has made some pretty bold claims about **KORE** changing the way electronic music will be made. Now that it's arrived, exactly how much heat does it pack? In no particular order, the hardware/software combination will: effectively organize your plug-ins and presets (with attributes like articulation and texture); provide you with automated MIDI knob control for your most commonly used parameters; serve as a USB 2.0 soundcard; provide a single, unified interface for your five zillion plug-ins; provide a specific interface for live electronic performance (to easily switch between scenes and setups); and set you back five papers. Sound complicated? It is. There's a ton going on here, making KORE one of those products that simply begs for a demonstration. Seek one out before pushing that "buy" button. *Evan Shamoon*

MOST DEF

XtremeMac/Future Sonics FS1 High Definition Earphones

MSRP: \$149.95; www.xtrememac.com

For all the injustices that MP3 players have wreaked on sound quality, they've sparked just as many headphone manufacturers to step up their game to make up the difference. Companies like Etymotic, for instance, make some seriously hi-def earphones for the iPod generation. Xtrememac's **FS1 High Definition Earphones** are easily some of the MP3-player world's finest isolating buds. In fact, in comparison to Etymotic's ER6 series, the FS1s—along with having thicker cords (to better prevent breakage) and a wider array of earpieces included in each pack—have a bit more thump and clarity on the low-end. While the rubber flange tips aren't terribly comfortable, the pliable foam bits (also included) are both snug and cut out layers of ambient noise—perfect for my morning bus commute. Now the only thing that reminds me I'm listening to MP3s are my crappy encoding prefs. *Aaron Ashley*



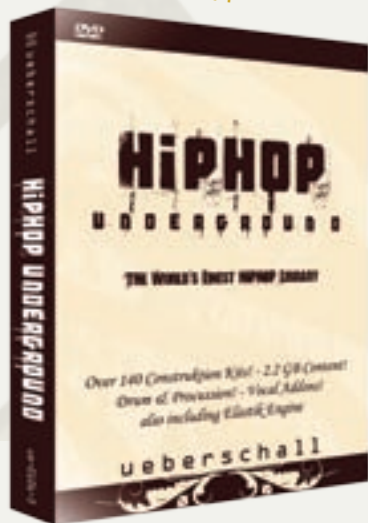
SPIN 2.0

Numark x2 Hybrid Turntable

MSRP: \$1499; www.numark.com

Are you among the digital DJ set who would like to avoid bringing a \$1200 PowerBook to an enclosed area where drunk people dance dangerously close with beverage in hand? Then load up some CDs with MP3 files, grab two **Numark x2** hybrid turntables, and you're... well, still packin' some dough, but at least your life's work saved on the laptop's hard drive is safely at home. The x2 interprets movements from a special piece of vinyl—much like Scratch LIVE or Final Scratch—to manipulate buffered audio coming from within an internal CD drive. An interchangeable tone-arm system and the industry's highest torque direct drive motor round out the feature set. If you can't figure out why everyone around you is driving a hybrid car, it's because they are smarter than you and have money invested in places you don't. A hybrid turntable, though? Only time will tell. *Ryan Sommer*

BE CAREFUL OF
INGESTING TOO
MUCH OF THIS
FAKE BEEF.



SEEKING SPECIAL SAUCE

Ueberschall Hip-Hop Underground Sound Library

MSRP: \$119; www.ueberschall.com

Germany's Ueberschall has produced the Big Mac of music libraries; **Hip-Hop Underground** is useful as quick fuel, but be careful of ingesting too much of this fake beef. The upside of this module (which includes individual instrument hits as well as full song construction kits) is its bundled beat-mapping/chopping application *Elastik*. This app allows the user to load samples from the 2.4GB library, map them to a controller keyboard, and play back with optional filtering and EQ, either as a stand-alone device or within a host like Live, Nuendo, or Logic. But with loops that sound like MC Hammer produced by a crack-smoking Lil' Jon-wanabe—with actual insulting titles like "Pussy Juice," "Sorry Hoes," and "Getcha Ass"—it'll take a lot of special sauce to make this meal taste good. *Tomas Palermo*

EVER SINCE I
SMASHED UP MY
WIFE'S HONDA, I'VE
BEEN PINING FOR
MY DAILY DRIVING
FIX OF NATIONAL
PUBLIC RADIO.



SHARK ATTACK

Griffin Technology radio SHARK AM-FM Desktop Radio

MSRP: \$69.99; www.griffintech.com

Ever since I smashed up my wife's Honda, I've been pining for my daily driving fix of National Public Radio. Sure I can log onto the net and download some creaky Real stream, but I like flicking through the dial and getting my local NPR news and strange tunes from our nearby college and pirate stations. And no, I can't seem to find a regular radio in my office, either. That's where the cool, USB-powered **radio SHARK** comes in handy. Quickly load up the simple Mac/PC app and soon you'll be surfing through the frequencies, with the capacity to record and play back with immediate ease. Tuning and seeking is a snap with my mouse, and I can even schedule the SHARK to record future programs for me. Good thing, 'cause I'm never here in time for Morning Edition. *Ken Taylor*



TO MPC OR NOT TO MPC?

M-Audio Axiom 25 Keyboard Controller

MSRP: \$235.95; www.m-audio.com

Since the advent of the classic, hip-hop-identified MPC sampler, numerous companies have emerged with drum pad-based devices that contain intuitive, MPC-style interfaces while expanding control possibilities. Like its cousin the Trigger Finger, **M-Audio's Axiom 25** controller features eight square pads that can be used either for drum programming or be MIDI-mapped to control any software instrument. When I used the Axiom 25 with Reason, I had difficulty with the preset drum mapping for ReDrum (certain hits simply didn't register), and neither the PDF manual nor online help addressed my problem. Further, Axiom's large, semi-weighted keys were hard to manipulate, creating a lot of jumbled notation. But with its eight assignable rotary knobs, transport buttons, zoning capabilities, and, especially, its affordable price point, Axiom might solve your compositional quandaries. *Tomas Palermo*

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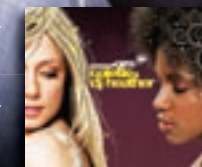
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M-AUDIO

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VIS-ED: TAUBA AUERBACH

A former sign painter taps into the magical powers of language.

WORDS: VIVIAN HOST IMAGES: TAUBA AUERBACH



ABOVE:
0-9, From the Center Out, Digital
(gouache on paper, 22"x30")
The Whole Alphabet, From the Center
Out, Digital (gouache on paper,
22"x30")

RIGHT:
IS-NT, Exclusive for XLR8R Vis-Ed

For many people, language is an afterthought—to Tauba Auerbach, it's everything. Her work centers on the power of words and alphabets, bestowing a rather mystic quality on the tools of everyday communication. Using elaborate calligraphy, reconfigured typewriters, and painstakingly rendered ink drawings that often resemble rebus puzzles, Auerbach's pieces are at first achingly simple, then ponderously complex as they force one to muse on the shortcomings of language.

I reach Bay Area-based Auerbach just as mysteriously, via email through Laurie Lazer, co-owner of San Francisco's Luggage Store Gallery (where Auerbach has shown, in addition to L.A.'s New Image Art). Her emails appear carefully thought out, suggesting a depth beyond her age (24) and the aftereffects of having studied art at Stanford (under the tutelage of friend and Mission School artist Margaret Kilgallen). In between doodling imperfect circles and listening to The Slits and Chilean prog-folk act Congregación Viene, Auerbach typed to us about signifiers, secret codes, and special letters.

By day you are a sign painter. I imagine that to be very meditative.

I actually quit my job at the sign shop about a year ago, but you're right that painting signs has a meditative quality. I felt like I was constantly on a quest for the perfect balance between painting fast and gracefully and not going so fast that I would mess up, because fixing mistakes was painstaking and always made the letters end up looking stiff and labored, which was what I was trying to avoid in the first place. The example is kind of specific, but the idea applies

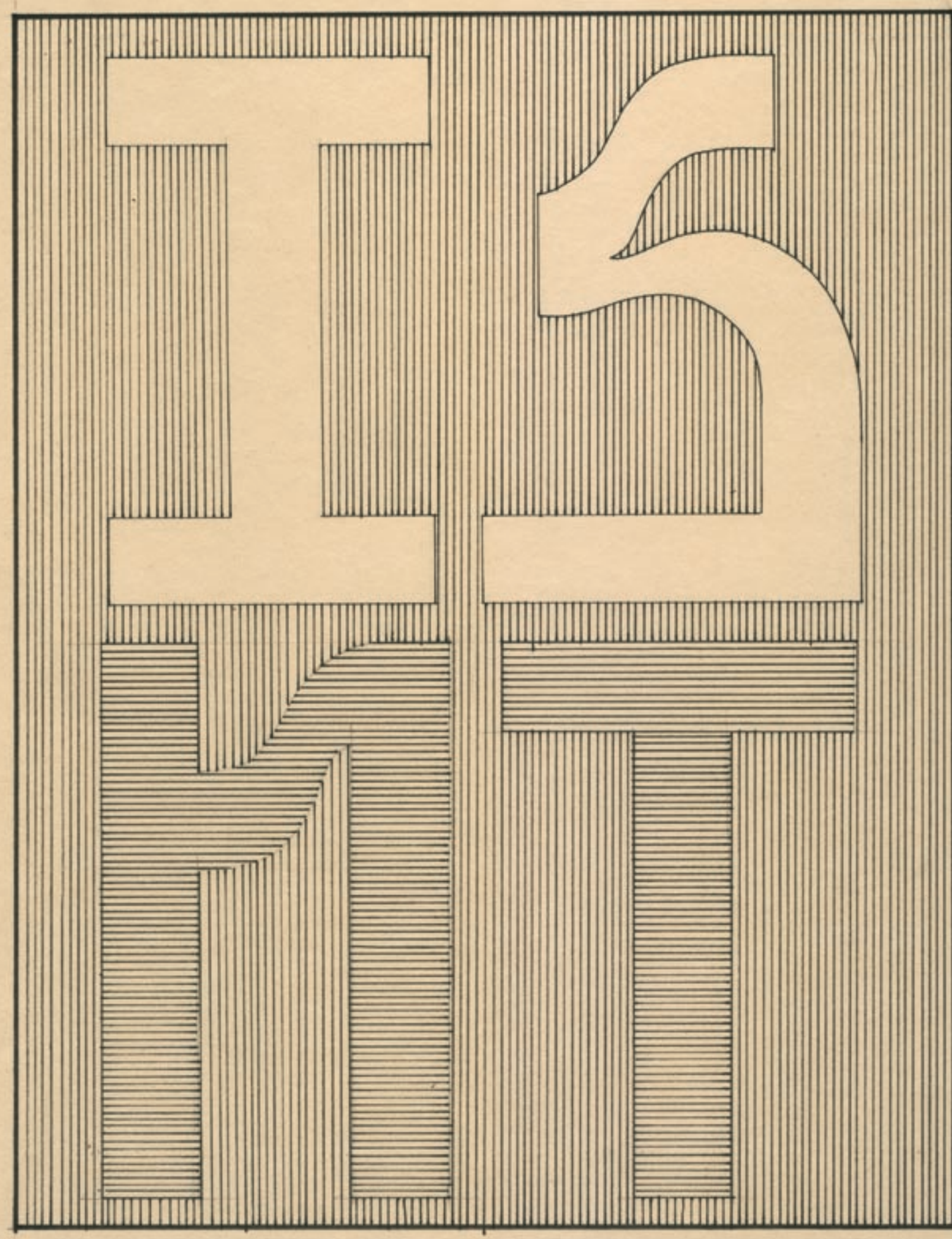
to a lot of situations. Balance is so hard. It takes constant self-observation and millions of tiny adjustments.

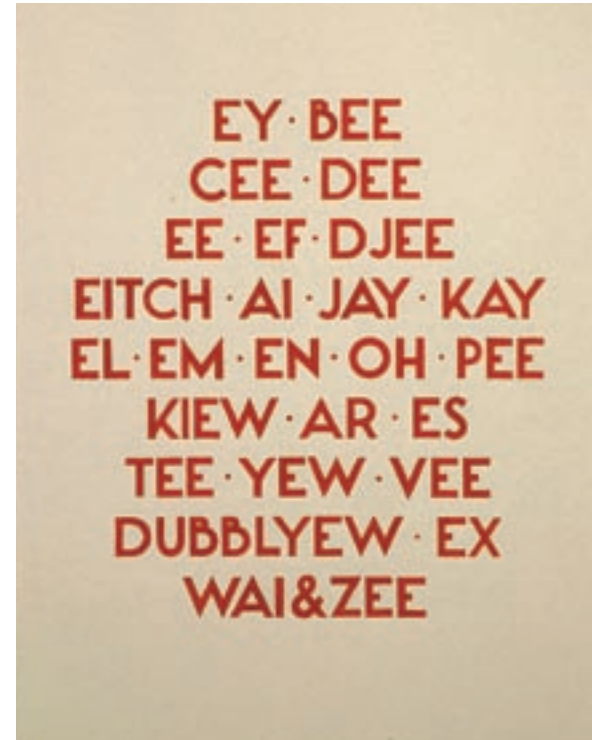
What are your favorite letters to paint? Are there any letters that you don't get along with?

My favorite letters to paint are not necessarily my favorite letters to look at. Rs and Ss are challenging to paint, but some of my favorites aesthetically. E, A, and Q are also at the top of the favorites list. There used to be some letters that I hated, but not anymore. We all get along pretty well now.

What is your favorite way to communicate?

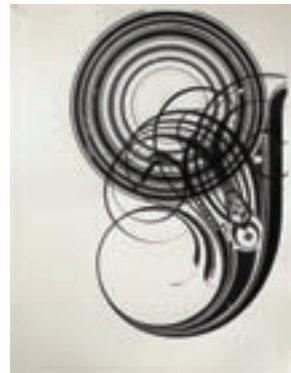
It's interesting that you should ask that, because in the last year or so I have become a huge mail sender. I have a few really good regular penpals. My friend Will always sends me these beautiful typewritten letters where he rotates the orientation of the paper in the typewriter to make different designs and patterns. We send letters back and forth every few weeks. My last one to him was in a code that he had to decipher. I was reading about old spy communications, and the different kinds of codes they'd write in. One of my favorite ones is where the two parties would agree to always refer to a certain book, and correspondences were made up of a series of pairs of numbers like "33,157," which would mean that the reader should look up the 157th word on the 33rd page. The whole letter was number pairs [that were] substituted for words.





THIS PAGE (top row):
Morse Alphabet, No Spaces, Yellow (ink on paper, 22"x30")
How To Spell The Alphabet (ink on paper, 22"x30")
 THIS PAGE (bottom row):
A, E, G, R, V (all ink on paper, 38"x50")

OPPOSITE PAGE (clockwise from left):
Edland 1892 Indexing, JVCRAK and ergonomic QWERTY
Ugaritic Alphabet
And Per Se And (ink on paper)



One of your shows at New Image was titled "Signs of the Real and Infinite." What does that title mean to you?

My friend Nico [Dios] and I did that show together. We came up with the name because we were both making art about symbols—his work is mostly about numbers and math and mythology. We had this connection about signifier systems, and how they represent everything from very tangible, real things in the world to totally abstract ideas like God, truth, ambivalence, or infinity.

What's the most interesting thing to you about the Morse alphabet?

The Morse alphabet is what got me thinking about how abstract all alphabets are. Morse is made up of flashes of light, or tones of different length, just on and off, a lot like digital encoding...And it's amazing to me that all of our meanings and thoughts, every word you've ever said or written

in your whole life, could be reduced to a series of flashes or pulses. I also think it's interesting that the spaces in between the signals mean as much as the signals themselves.

Your work seems very meticulous. Are you a perfectionist in your personal life?

By nature, yes. But I am trying to have more balance about that in my work and in my personal life. Sometimes I'll be sort of compulsive about getting things precise and perfect, but I'm starting to like and even revere the imperfect things that happen along the way.

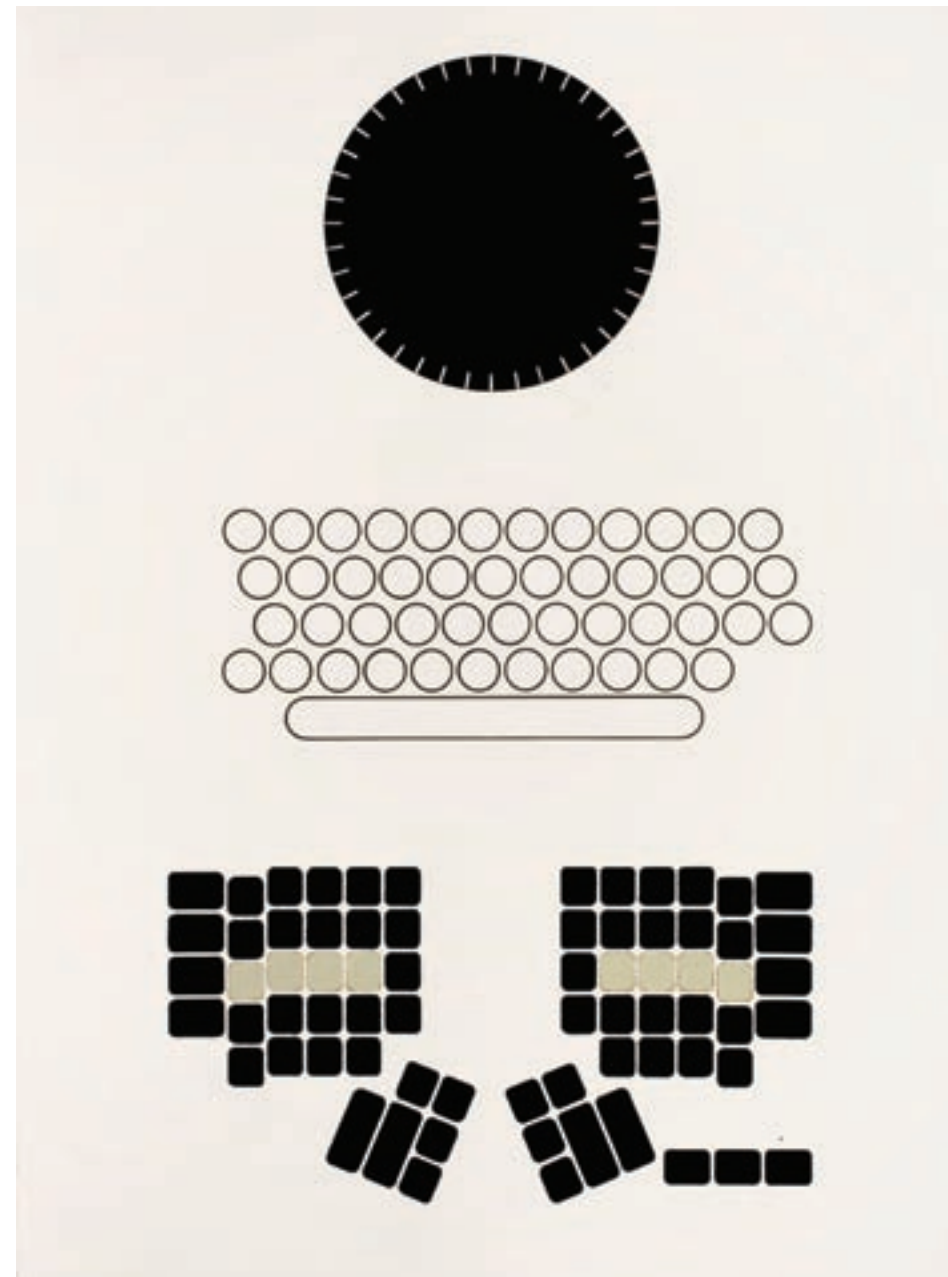
How do you feel about computers and how they are changing language?

That is a big question. Computers are changing everything, and language kind of coats everything we do, so they are inextricably linked. What's most interesting to me is how the language that

computers use is changing our world. Everything is getting digitally encoded—old analog recordings and films, photographs, people's voices. Film grain changes when it's turned into pixels. And it's not just that real things are being made into digital information, it goes the other direction too—digital information is actually creating real things. And the way the digital language works is, like any other language, not unbiased. Because it is a binary system, it precludes any real ambiguity, and can only simulate it. It's all 0s and 1s. There is actually no 0.5 in the language.

What do you think is the ugliest word in the English language, based on either meaning or looks or both?

There is a little tiny street in San Francisco called Larch. I always walk past it and think, "That is a disgusting word." I believe it's the name of a tree.



What do you do when you're lacking inspiration?

I go to the library. It never fails, because if I go there without a direct purpose, it feels acceptable to indulge a tangent or just sort of let my mind wander. Every time I feel stuck, I get out of it because I am somehow reminded of how much stuff and information there is in the world. I usually have the problem of being excited by too many things, and wanting to learn about and do more things than there is time for.

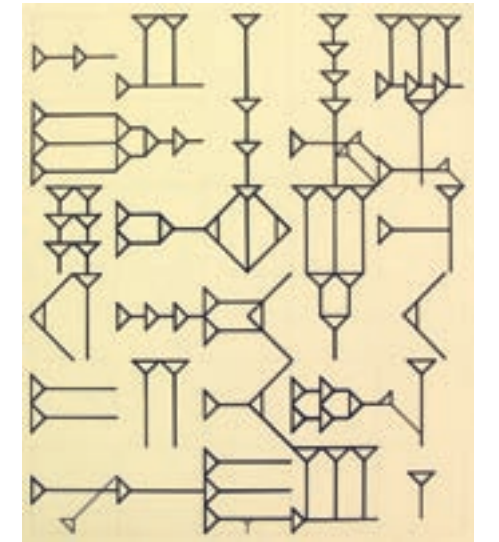
How did you get your start?

I sort of don't know how to answer that because I don't know where the "start" is. I have always been making art. I drew and built things as a kid and both my parents are very artistic, crafty people who would always help me carry out any project I wanted to do, no matter how stupid. My dad is one of those people who can build anything...and he has a lot of tools. One time when

I was little we made this ridiculous house for my pet rabbit at the time, Momo. My dad called it Chateau Momo, because it had separate rooms, including a little private room for the rabbit to go and hide if he didn't feel like being social. We did a lot of projects together and sometimes we still do. My mom went to CCA(C) and knows a lot about ceramics and plaster. Her art is up all over their house. My parents are very supportive and interested in art. So for me, the "start" is really my childhood.

What did you study at Stanford?

I studied Studio Art, but I chose to go there because it wasn't strictly an art school and I could take classes in any area I wanted. For me it was really the right decision because I was kind of a nerd, so I took classes in physics and engineering even though they weren't connected to my official major. The biggest lesson I learned in



college though is that academia is not the end-all it thinks it is.

What daily rituals do you have?

I don't really have any. I am not a person who needs structure or routine to function. I think I am very self-disciplined, so I just do things when I want or feel like I should, and everything kind of just gets done. I feel very, very lucky that I can set my own schedule and be so in control of my daily life.

Have you always been interested in letters?

Pretty much always. I was really into changing and perfecting my handwriting when I was growing up and we had to handwrite everything in school. I put a lot of thought into how I wrote letters; I even remember writing in my diary about it—how I was inventing a new "A," and was going to use the new one from that point forward.



NET GAINS

Can progressive political groups take advantage of the promise of the internet?

Words Patrick Sisson Illustration Andi Brandenburg (www.besosnotbombs.com)

Unfortunately, most people only remember Howard Dean's presidential run for "the roar," his outrageous and earnest "Yearghh!" blurt that circled on the internet for months after the 2004 caucuses. Beyond his derision-spurring yell, that presidential campaign is also remembered for jumpstarting online political action. Between Dean's fundraising and the deployment of high-tech organizing tools—Meetup.com groups, blogs like Daily Kos, and the community-building success known as MoveOn.org—it seemed like progressives ruled online politics.

But this year's midterm election, as well as the 2008 vote, will be the real proving ground for the internet's political potential. In fact, Senator Harry Reid already addressed the first Yearly Kos political blogging convention earlier this summer. According to Julie Germany and Carol Darr, both of the Institute for Politics, Democracy & the Internet at George Washington University, most of the signs point towards a huge increase in online political activity, with interest groups learning how to leverage social-networking sites.

What are progressive groups, who rely on grassroots organizing, doing to make their mark online in 2006? Answer: MySpace. Germany points out that the site's potential, which bolsters blogging and email tools, has already been utilized by groups like Planned Parenthood, which has a huge presence on the site and recently ran a MySpace-oriented campaign in Louisiana.

The social-networking behemoth is so ubiquitous (and fast-moving) that the BLOC Network (Building Leadership Organizing Communities) recently developed Mybloc.net as a MySpace for the left. Debuting this July at the Hip-Hop Political Convention in Chicago, it's designed to enable organizers to stay in touch after large national meetings, create profiles for groups or campaigns, and plot strategy—all without ads or Fox prez Rupert Murdoch (who recently purchased MySpace).

Additionally, Germany and Darr point out that in countries like Nepal and the Philippines, political movements and protests are being organized using text-message technology. Even groups like the Sweet Relief Musicians Fund charity now allow donors to text small contributions.

But will it work for bigger campaigns? According to Mervyn Marciano, Communications Director of the League of Pissed-Off Voters, anything that assists street-level organizing and enables people without computers to participate in politics helps.

"The internet plays a very big role [in] trying to get people out for initiatives and keeping them clued in to what we're doing," said Marciano. "But a lot of people who work with us do not [have access to] the internet...We have an affiliate in New Orleans, and that's not the place to do online organizing right now. At the end of the day, going on campuses and [to the] streets in our neighborhoods is still the best way to make people know what we're doing."

Though it's easy to get carried away with new innovations, it's important for organizations to maintain focus. Sascha Lewis—founder of the Flavorpill family of online entertainment newsletters, which launched a political newsletter called Activate in June—says it's still all about crafting the right message. Emails remain the killer app, and the best way to keep members informed, but no matter what medium is used, political groups will falter if they don't stay focused.

"The web is amazing because it's enabled everybody to be a publisher, and the democratization of publishing is something we all should embrace," says Lewis. "But you need to respect what that means and define the cause. If [you're] going to make a stand or position [yourself] as a leader, you [have] do it with a certain set of standards so that people take you seriously."

www.indyvoter.org, www.mybloc.net, www.myspace.com, www.activate.us, www.ipdi.org, www.dailykos.com

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Larry McDonald: The Platinum Mime, "Dancin' since 1978" (Photo by Morgan Howland)



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